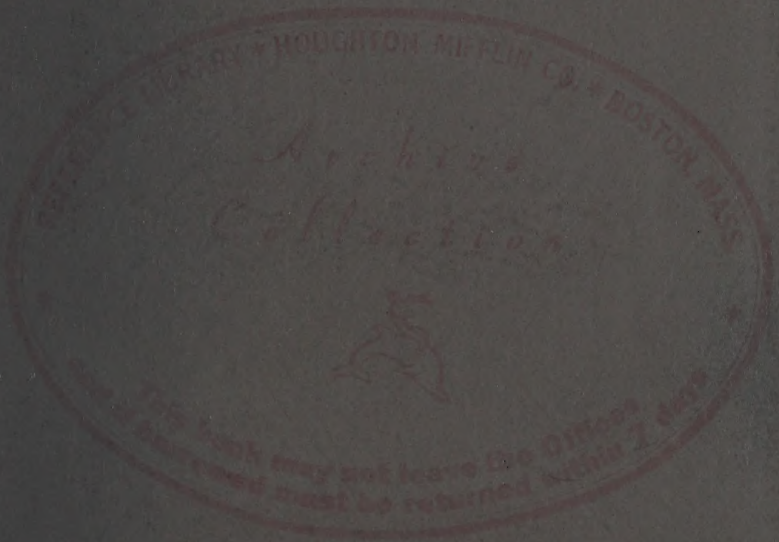
# THE STORY OF MARY WASHINGTON

BY MARION HARLAND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*Mary Ball Washington*

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# THE STORY OF
# MARY WASHINGTON

BY

MARION HARLAND

*WITH PORTRAIT AND EIGHT ILLUSTRATIONS*

"I have seen the only Roman matron living at this day."
*Lafayette, 1784.*

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
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# THE STORY OF MARY WASHINGTON

## CHAPTER I.

The counties of Westmoreland, Richmond, Northumberland, and Lancaster, in eastern Virginia, form the peninsula that separates the Rappahannock from the Potomac River. In the year 1700, Lancaster County lent character to the "Northern Neck," famed for broad plantations and for the wealth and refinement of the inhabitants.

The largest landholder in this region was Robert Carter, of Corotoman, a territorial grant washed upon the east by the Chesapeake, and upon the south by the Rappahannock. The latter is a lordly stream at this point, and navigable for over a hundred miles from the mouth. John Carter, the father of Robert, built in 1670 the first

Episcopal church on the Neck. His name had headed the list of parish vestrymen in 1654, preceding that of the clergyman, — an arbitrary order followed in the cases of his namesake-son John, and Robert, surnamed "King" Carter, the greatest of the line. The temper and customs of the day and country were semi-feudal; leaders were few in number and despotic in spirit. If planters and small farmers dwelt together in unity it was because the autocrat's position was not questioned.

So near to Christ Church which the first Carter had builded, that the two were early in the eighteenth century united into one parish, was St. Mary's White Chapel; the place of worship for those belonging to this parish was a chapel-of-ease of the mother-church. Prominent among her vestrymen for almost one hundred years was the name of Ball. It occurs so frequently upon the crumbling tombstones paving the old churchyard as to persuade one into the idea that this was, at the first, a family burying-ground, and the chapel an afterthought.

The present building, erected in 1740, occupies the site of one which was attended regularly by Colonel Joseph Ball, of Lancaster. His father, William Ball, emigrated from England about the year 1650, and settled at the mouth of the Corotoman River, a tributary of the Rappahannock. His homestead, Epping Forest, one of the centres of influence to which I have referred, was inherited by Joseph Ball. The parish record has an entry to the effect that while White Chapel was in building in 1740, Joseph Ball asked and obtained leave to construct a gallery in the same for his family pew. Stipulation was made that it "be completed at the same time with the church, and finished in the same style with the West gallery." The vestryman-petitioner was made colonel by Governor Spotswoode, who entered upon the duties of his office in 1710.

The owner of Epping Forest was then plain "Mr.," or at most, "Major," on the late autumnal day in the year of our Lord 1706, when his youngest child, Mary, was born.

There were other children in the home: Joseph and Hannah by a former marriage, and the "Sister Susie," of whom we hear in Mary's letters, and who was probably her own mother's child. The Ball house was a square frame structure, plain in architecture, with a porch in front, and upper and lower porticos recessed by two half-wings, in the rear. A grove of native trees surrounded it on all sides. We get our first mention of the baby-girl in a will executed by her father, when she was between five and six years old: —

"I give and bequeath unto my daughter, Mary, 400 acres of land in Richmond County in ye freshes of Rappa-h-n River, being a part of a pattern of 1600 acres to her, ye said Mary and her heirs forever."

When this was written the testator was, he states, "lying upon the bed in my lodging-chamber, making my last will and testament, commending my soul to God with sound and disposing mind."

In the scarcity of information respecting Mary Ball's childhood and girlhood, we

catch eagerly at the shadowy sketch indicated to a lively fancy by the few lines copied above. The "lodging-chamber," the heart of the old Virginia country-house, was, we assume, upon the first floor of the square dwelling. Upon the 25th of June, the date of this instrument, windows and doors would stand wide open to every wind of heaven. The leaves of oaks, hickories, and poplars would be quivering in the salt air blowing fresh from the Bay; mocking-birds and robins were singing in rapturous chorus, and the voice of the baby of the household blending with all other jocund sounds while the sick man made provision for her, her heirs, and assigns.

That, although "smitten with sore sickness," the good vestryman did not then join his kindred in the churchyard of White Chapel, we gather from the partial list of contributors to the salary of Rev. John Bell, of Christ Church, Lancaster, in 1712. Colonel Joseph Ball subscribed five pounds, equal then to treble that sum in our day. His title of "Colonel Ball, of Lancaster"

was used to distinguish him from a cousin of the same name and rank, resident in another county. His brother, William Ball, had eight sons, five of whom married and left sons to keep alive his name upon the earth. We hear of but four children of Colonel Joseph Ball, and his only son had no male issue.

The Ball coat-of-arms is thus described:

"The escutcheon bears a lion rampant, a coat-of-mail, and a shield bearing two lions and a *fleur de lys*. The crest is a helmet with closed visor. Above the lion is a broad bar, half red and half gold. On the scroll which belongs to it are these words: '*Cælumque tueri*.'"

"They were taken, of course," says Bishop Meade, in his "Old Churches and Families of Virginia," "from these lines of Ovid: —

"'Pronaque cum spectant animalia cætera terram
Os homini sublime dedit cælumque tueri.'"

These particulars are given the more fully because of an impression, as erroneous as general, prevailing among superficial readers of American history to the effect

that Mary Washington's origin was obscure and her breeding mean. Her lineage — if less august than that of her husband, whose descent from William de Hertburn, Lord of the Manor of Washington in the time of Richard III., is clearly proved — was not ignoble, nor were her associations ever other than those of dignified respectability. "King" Carter's family were the Balls' near neighbors and friends, and their circle of acquaintances, if not extensive in the sparsely settled country where their lot was cast, was the best that country afforded.

After Colonel Ball's death, which took place while Mary was but a child, the widow, according to a kinswoman, lived many years, "which were undoubtedly devoted to careful training of her child, fitting her, as it proved, to pass with rare firmness and fortitude through the trials and vicissitudes that later life laid upon her."

The blast of civil war, that unroofed so many homes and lost to posterity records of incalculable value, fluttered to the feet of a reverent chronicler a fragment of a pri-

vate letter found in a deserted mansion near the York River, which is beyond price to those who are interested in the story of Mary Ball's early life. Despair, indignant and impotent, seizes us at the thought of how much as precious and even more satisfactory to the student of colonial history was destroyed like so much waste paper in those four years of wrath and desolation. The letter, from which the signature is missing, begins thus: —

"WMSBURG, ye 7th of Octr, 1722

"DEAR SUKEY, Madam Ball of Lancaster and Her Sweet Molly have gone Hom. Mamma thinks Molly the Comliest Maiden She Knows. She is about 16 yrs old, is taller than Me, is verry Sensable, Modest and Loving. Her Hair is like unto Flax, Her Eyes are the color of Yours and her Chekes are like May blossoms. I wish you could see her."

We do seem to see her in lingering over the portrait done in miniature in colors that are fresh to this day. It is, as if in exploring a catacomb, we had happened upon a

fair chamber adorned with a frescoed portrait of a girl-princess of a legendary age. Romancist and biographer are one as we study the picture, line by line. The brush was dipped in the limner's heart and wrought passing well. A shade of demureness is imparted to winsome Molly by the mention of Madam Ball and by the citation of the nameless writer's mamma's approval of her daughter's intimate, — demureness that becomes the maiden as moss the half-opened rose.

She sits for her likeness upon a stool in Madam Ball's shadow, the blue eyes glancing shyly up from her sampler, and the May blossoms (that must mean wild roses as they blush upon the Eastern shore) unfolding in her "chekes" at her hostess's commendation of her "comliness." The October sunshine is tangled in curls that are "like unto flax," and soften the contour of a forehead that would be, but for their shading, too high for feminine loveliness. A likeness, reputed to be of her, taken at twenty-three, shows us this, and that her nose was

a delicate aquiline, her mouth small, with firm lines that would become severe under the pressure of circumstance. We are told, moreover, that her voice was to the last of her life sweet, with pleasant English cadences. She and her mother had been visiting Williamsburg, just then in the flush of its lately acquired honors as the capital of the State. A brave life and a gay was that of which Mary Ball had glimpses from under the wing of the discreet mother. To the eyes of the provincial beauty Duke of Gloucester Street must have been what the Mall was to Miss Burney's "Evelina," and the Apollo Room at the Raleigh Tavern on Assembly nights as much like a scene of Arabian enchantment as Vauxhall to that unsophisticated diarist and correspondent.

Virginia's most graceful historian, John Esten Cooke, is especially happy in delineation of life in the capital at that date. This is one of his pictures, beginning with the celebrated tavern wherein Jefferson danced with his Belinda: —

"It was on Gloucester Street, a building

of wood, erected about 1700, with entrances on both fronts, and a leaden bust of Sir Walter Raleigh over the main doorway. The large apartment called the 'Apollo Room' was a favorite place for balls.

"The town consisted of detached houses without pretensions to architectural beauty, but this modest hamlet was the scene of much that was brilliant and attractive in Virginia society. . . . The love of social intercourse had been a marked trait of the Virginians in all generations. . . . The violins seemed to be ever playing for the divertissement of the youths and maidens; the good horses were running for the purse or cup; cocks were fighting; the College students were mingling with the throng in their academic dress. . . . It was a scene full of gayety and abandon."

The population of Virginia was, in 1722, rated at 70,000, double that of Maryland, the next most populous colony, and there was but one older college in North America than her William and Mary, now well established in the renewed lease of life in-

augurated after the fire of 1705. Pretty Molly Ball had strolled past the University buildings at the head of Gloucester Street and looked down the mile-long vista, straight as plumb-line could make it, and edged with fine trees, to the Capitol at the far end. Perhaps she was escorted through them by a gallant collegian with "dear Sukey's" correspondent upon the other side of her. She had stared and laughed at the queer octagonal stone construction, already yclept "The Powder Horn," built by Governor Spotswoode in 1717 as a magazine for ammunition. Her soft eyes had rounded with delight at sight of the Governor's Palace, the wonder of the tide-water region, standing in the middle of pleasure-grounds between three and four hundred acres in extent, planted with tulip-poplars, maples, lindens, and aspens; had doubtless looked in loyal reverence upon the portraits of king, queen, and princes that hung in the state reception-room. Being ever "verry sensable" and thoughtful, she must have carried back to the seclusion of Epping Forest ma-

terial for reflection and talk for months to come. Even if this were her first visit to Williamsburg, she could never again be an unlearned rustic to whom news of the gay world was like messages in an unknown tongue from foreign lands.

Four months thereafter (January 14, 1723) we have something from our heroine's own hand that may or may not denote the growth of intellectual tastes implanted during her sojourn at the seat of polite literature and the birthplace of Virginia journalism. "Brother Joseph," the elder and mentor of the half-sister, grown to manhood, had succeeded his father as her virtual if not legal guardian. He had been sent to England to be educated, a custom much in vogue with those of the early colonists who could afford the advantage for their sons. It goes far toward accounting for the circumstance that the education of the men of the times was so far superior to that of the girls. Joseph Ball, Jr., had fallen in love with London, and never again resided in America except for a few months at a time. These

visits must, however, have been tolerably frequent, and his supervision of his young sister conscientiously strict, if we are to judge from her deference to him, her continual reference of all matters of weight to his superior judgment, and the masterful tone in which he addressed her. He had married an Englishwoman, and was now a city barrister, resident at Stratford-by-Bow, London.

"Few of her letters remain. It is probable that few were written," says Mary Ball's kinswoman-biographer. "The handwriting is stiff and cramped, the spelling bad, but they are most sensibly and earnestly expressed."

Queen Anne spelled no better, and Mary Ball's handwriting is as legible as copperplate, albeit school-girlish and ungraceful.

She was in her seventeenth year, having celebrated her sixteenth birthday soon after her return from visiting "dear Sukey's" confidante, when she indited a letter upon family matters to her fraternal guardian, in which is the following paragraph: —

"We have not had a schoolmaster in our neighborhood until now in nearly four years. We have now a young minister living with us who was educated at Oxford, took orders and came over as assistant to Rev. Kemp, at Gloucester. That parish is too poor to keep both, and he teaches school for his board. He teaches Sister Susie and me and Madam Carter's boy and two girls. I am now learning pretty fast. Mamma and Susie and I all send love to you and Mary. This from your loving sister,

"MARY BALL."

Bishop Meade speaks of the Kempes of Gloucester as "having at an early period in the history of Virginia been characterized by devotion to the welfare of the Church and religion," but one scans in vain his annals of the parishes in Gloucester for record of the name of "Rev. Kemp." It is, therefore, idle to conjecture as to who was his assistant, the young Oxonian whose name demure Molly omits so cavalierly. The failure to write it in any part of the

communication may have been the result of indifference bordering upon contempt on the part of one who had already won the title of the "Belle of the Northern Neck," or the lapse may be significant. The careless note of such an important event as the addition to the country household of a young minister educated at Oxford, and who, she is careful to state, took orders there, savors of studied negligence. She may not have cared to call the prosperous London barrister's attention to the perilous propinquity of his sister to a curate who was content (or compelled) to teach five pupils for his board in Madam Ball's family. Brother Joseph's word was potential with his much-younger sister, possibly with his stepmother, and Mary may have had a shrewd fear that her scholastic career might be arrested if his suspicions were excited by details of the personality and qualifications of the tutor. If such an idea crossed her mind she hastened to avert the danger by casually and agreeably remarking that she was now "learning pretty fast." Her naïve compla-

cency is engaging. Evidently her untrained powers had required considerable breaking-in. At sixteen she would be "in society," and to fold her wings into the school-girl chrysalis demanded an effort.

It is to be deplored that the transcriber of this one of the few letters that bear her signature thought it seemly to put the orthography into shape. A quaint flavor, as of lavender and dried rose-leaves, clings to the yellow old pages covered with unpracticed characters that have come down to us from the average woman of the last century, and much of the charm is due to the reckless defiance of all rules touching spelling and the use of capitals.

An ancient gentlewoman, whose wit was the joy of her intimates, once defended this lawlessness, and not unsuccessfully: —

"Language is only the vehicle of thought," she argued. "In those days people cared little for varnish and plating. The main thing was to have the vehicle hold together and be safe and comfortable."

Without their old-time perfume, letters a

hundred years old are shorn and flat. We are glad that Mary Ball's enthusiastic panegyrist wrote of her "chekes," and we smile, almost affectionately, over the two r's in the "verry" that qualifies "sensable." It would have been interesting to see how Mary spelled — say such words as "schoolmaster" and "assistant" — after four years' famine (or respite) from pedagogues, and while her learning was in a state of satisfactory forwardness.

In this epistle we have the only definite allusion to the fourth child of Colonel Ball, — "Sister Susie." History is dumb, but for this passing mention, as to this one of Washington's maternal aunts, and tradition tells us nothing beyond what we glean from Mary's prim talk of her fellow-student who joins her and "Mama" in sending love to the far-away kindred. That she learned her lessons from Rev. Kemp's curate would imply nearness in age to the youngest of the band, and we hope that Mary had this one full-blooded sister.

Madam Carter's boy and two girls prob-

ably represented one fourth of the dozen olive-plants that had grown up about the wide-leaved table of "King" Carter. The family school was an English custom brought over with heirlooms of lace and silver from "Home," and which in some sections of Virginia has outlived the "onward-and-upward" rush of free and popular school-education.

## CHAPTER II.

The chronicler to whom the MSS. found in the dismantled mansion of the York River were consigned supplies us with another and important event in Mary Ball's girlhood. A fragment of a tattered, faded letter, signed "Lizzy Burwell," retains part of the address to "*Miss Nelly Car*" — (undoubtedly "Carter"), and of the heading and date, — "*tank*" (why not Piaukatank, the next parish to Lancaster, or perhaps Chotank, afterward the seat of a Lawrence Washington?) — "*May ye 15th* 1728." The paper crumbled at the reader's touch; the yellow-brown blotches that bespeak the thumbing of Time ran together all over the sheet. But three short lines were legible even to eyes skilled in deciphering ancient records: —

. . . "understand Molly Ball is going home with her Brother, a Lawyer, who lives

in England. Her Mother is Dead three months ago, and her Sister" —

Ah, her sister! what of "Sister Susie"? Does the "and" awkwardly include Molly's school-fellow in the death-roll with the mother? It might well read, "and her Sister died last year, or last month, or last week." If she went on to say, "her Sister was married the other day," some Lancaster genealogist would have added to the list of "William and Joseph Ball; William's daughter Hannah, who married Daniel Fox; his eight sons; Colonel Burgess Hall, only son of Jeduthun the third, youngest son of James, the third son of said William; Joseph Ball, Jr., who had no male issue, but whose nephew was General George Washington, son of his sister Mary, youngest daughter of Colonel Joseph Ball, of Lancaster; David Ball, seventh son of Captain William Ball, born in 1686," — and an interminable line of other worthies, who were begotten, who lived, and who died on the Northern Neck, — some local antiquarian would, I say, have bracketed with these

Susan Ball, who married this or that planter, or maybe an imported clergyman.

It seems altogether likely that when the orphaned Mary left Epping Forest forever to become a part of Brother Joseph's family, she left none nearer in blood than he to be regretted in her exile. It was a long farewell to the girlish days that were slipping away from her, according to the prejudice of that era. She was within a few months of two-and-twenty, and still Molly Ball, spinster. Southern girls went off in looks earlier then than in our favored days, and as a rule went off the single list between sixteen and twenty. Gray shadows had begun to chase the blue out of the eyes of her who had borne modestly the sobriquets of the "Belle of the Northern Neck," and the "Rose of Epping Forest;" the flaxen curls were darkening into chestnut, and in tidewater Virginia May blossoms are short-lived.

There is comfort in the knowledge that Brother Joseph was with her to superintend the breaking up of the home, and to sustain

his sister's courage under all that the phrase implies. Bishop Meade asserts, and with authority, the identity of Mary Ball's brother with Mr. Joseph Ball, of Lancaster, of whose activity in promoting good works he cites an instance. An entry made in the records of Lancaster County in 1729 sets forth: —

"A proposition of Joseph Ball, Gentleman, in behalf of himself and the rest of the inhabitants of Virginia, directed to the Honourable the General Assembly concerning the instructing a certain number of young gentlemen, Virginians born, in the study of divinity, at the county's charge, was this day presented in court by the said Joseph Ball, and on his prayer, ordered to be certified to the General Assembly."

How the stout churchman who thus signified his own willingness to be taxed that the ranks of the native clergy might be filled could be an "inhabitant of Virginia," and at the same time "a Lawyer who lives in England," can only be explained by assuming that he retained his colonial estates and worked the principle of absenteeism in

both directions. A residence of months — perhaps of over a year — in Lancaster at the time of his mother's death may have sufficed to the legal conscience of the landholder to justify the claim of citizenship. If he were the "Gentleman" referred to in the record, and whose only daughter Fanny married Raleigh Downman in 1750, Mary Ball did not sail for England until a year after Lizzie Burwell wrote of the rumor that the common acquaintance of herself and Nelly Carter was going home with her brother. The venerable annalist of the church he loved and served so well sets no bounds about the declaration, — "This Joseph Ball was the uncle of George Washington."

In the parish register of the village of Cookham, Berkshire, England, are the names of numerous Washingtons and several Balls. A local legend, rehearsed by Benson J. Lossing, designates a Cookham villa as that occupied by Mary Ball after her marriage. As Joseph Ball was living at "Stratford-by-Bow Nigh London" in 1723, and also in

1760, and the presumption is that his sister carried out her expressed design of living with him, it is hardly likely that she met at Cookham, under the circumstances detailed by another tradition, the man whose wife she was to become.

This story runs that the fair American was residing in the Berkshire village with relatives who had given her a home in her orphanhood when a gentleman's traveling chariot was upset in front of the house, and he was brought in, seriously injured. He proved to be Miss Ball's countryman, Mr. Augustine Washington, and she bore a distinguished part in nursing him.

"In Virginia," surmises Lossing, "since the Washingtons and Balls lived in adjoining counties, they were doubtless personally acquainted with one another."

If this were true, Mary Ball recognized the sufferer as one who had other claims upon her sympathies besides those of a common nationality.

As Wessyngtons, Weshingtons, Wassingtons, and Washingtons, his ancestors had

played a conspicuous part in English history since the Conquest. One of them — a baronet — had married a half-sister of George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham ; another had served under Prince Rupert at Worcester. So stubborn was their loyalty to the Stuarts that two younger brothers of Sir William Washington, Buckingham's brother-in-law, sailed for America during the Protectorate, preferring expatriation and the hardships of colonial life to ease and plenty under regicide rule.

These were John and Laurence Washington, names repeated so often in the family genealogy that strict attention to chronology is necessary if we would avoid confusion of successive generations. Little is known of them prior to the embarkation. John, the elder and wealthier of the pair, was a Yorkshire gentleman living quietly at Cave Castle, a manorial seat of the Washingtons. His reputation was that of an energetic man with decided military taste, if not genius. The more scholarly Laurence had taken an Oxford degree, and was

married to the daughter of Sir Hugh Wallace. One year after his marriage in 1655, the brothers left their native land in company, moved by some fresh impulse of disgust for the Cromwellian administration, or provoked by what they construed into growth of tyranny. The popular belief is that they settled upon adjoining estates in Westmoreland, which is separated by Richmond County from Lancaster. Having brought wealth with them, they were soon eminent among the successful men of the region.

If Laurence's lands originally joined those of his brother he soon removed to Rappahannock County, where his will was recorded in 1675. John's was made, as by concert, in the same year, and both were admitted to probate in January, 1677, one upon the 6th, the other upon the 10th of the month, as if in their deaths they had not been long divided. These instruments breathe the spirit of exalted piety characteristic of the earlier American branches of the Washington family. No Roundhead

exhorter could have enunciated sentiments more evangelical than are contained in the preamble to the last will and testament of George Washington's great-grandfather: —

"Being heartily sorry from the bottom of my heart for my sins past, most humbly desiring forgiveness of the same from the Almighty God, my Saviour and Redeemer, in whom and by the merits of Jesus Christ I trust and believe assuredly to be saved, and to have full remission and forgiveness of all my sins, and that my soul with my body at the general resurrection shall rise again with joy" — is the language of triumphant faith. He "hopes," moreover, in good Calvinistic phrase, "through the merits of Jesus Christ's death and passion to possess and inherit the kingdom of heaven prepared for His elect and chosen."

His fortune, which "it has pleased God to give him far above his deserts," was large, and was divided between his wife and three children, John, Laurence, and Anne. Much of it was in the great staple of the region, tobacco. Four thousand weight

were devised to the rector of the church, in which he orders that a tablet containing the Ten Commandments shall be set up as his memorial stone. One thousand pounds sterling were left to his wife's brother, Thomas Pope, and the same sum and four thousand weight of tobacco to a sister who was on the eve of emigrating to America. Property in England is included among the bequests. His wife, Anne Pope, and his brother Laurence were his executors. He had lived in the land of his adoption eighteen years when an invasion of the Seneca Indians was made upon the colony, and John Washington was put in command of the forces hastily collected to oppose the savages. He was successful, and received a colonel's commission in recognition of the signal service rendered the menaced provinces. The parish in which he lived was named for him, and at the time of his death he was commander-in-chief of the Northern Neck.

The parallel between his character, his achievements, — even the honors paid him

and the titles conferred, — and those of his great descendant is too striking to be ignored by the thoughtful student of history.

His son Laurence married Mildred, daughter of Colonel Augustine Warner, a prominent freeholder of Gloucester. They had two sons, — John, named for his paternal, and Augustine for his maternal grandfather.

This rapid review of the history of the three generations immediately preceding the birth of our first President is interesting in significance to the believers in hereditary transmission of moral and mental traits. If, as Emerson has it, "Man is physically, as well as metaphysically, a thing of shred and patches, borrowed unequally from good and bad ancestors," it will be seen that there was abundance of superfine material for the outfit of the coming man of the eighteenth century, and that the cardinal virtues of patriotism, courage, temperance, thrift, justice to man and faith in God, which were constituents of *the* Washington's greatness, were the more stanch for a century's seasoning by the time they fell to him

## CHAPTER III.

Augustine, the second son of Laurence Washington and Mildred Warner his wife, was born in Westmoreland County, Virginia, in 1694, probably upon the plantation to which he afterward succeeded as proprietor. It is washed upon one side by Bridge's Creek, and upon the other by Pope's Creek, small rivers that run into the Potomac. The homestead stood not far from their junction with the greater stream. The lesser watercourses form two sides of a truncated triangle, within which lay the fertile patrimonial acres. The early life of Laurence Washington's sons was doubtless that of the well-born, well-endowed colonial youths of the period. They were trained in military exercises, hunted deer, foxes, wild turkeys and ducks, danced well, and had such theoretical knowledge of husbandry as qualified them to manage the overseers who would manage their plantations.

Augustine must have come into possession of his property in his nonage, for he married at twenty-one Jane, the daughter of Caleb Butler, Esq., whose lands skirted Bridge's Creek. The young couple lived together for thirteen years, during which time three sons, and the one daughter that almost seems to have been the rule in the Washington family, were born to them. The baby-girl was christened by the mother's name, but did not outlive early infancy. In November, 1728, the mother went to join her in the family vault near Bridge's Creek. At the age of thirty-four the father was a widower with the care of two sons of tender age upon him.

His second wife was wont to describe him as a stately and handsome gentleman, and contemporary authorities agree that his son George inherited his superb physique from this one of his parents. He was, a descendant tells us, "a noble-looking man of distinguished bearing, with fair, florid complexion, brown hair and fine gray eyes," and in the prime of early maturity

when thrown — whether literally or figuratively matters not — into the society of his whilome compatriote, Mary Ball. He had gone to England, it is said, to dispose of certain property to which he was heir by the terms of his grandfather's will. In 1853 there was standing in Cookham, England, a large walnut tree, which, it was alleged, was set out as a sapling by Augustine Washington "while a-waiting to find a purchaser for his property."

It is singular enough, considering the historical and social consequence of the parties concerned, that conjecture and oral tradition, in pretty equal proportions, make up the sum of what is generally accepted as the true relation of the circumstances attending the courtship and wedlock of Washington's father and mother. The probabilities are all in favor of the statement that they met and made (or renewed) in England the acquaintanceship that ended so auspiciously. Mary Ball was to accompany her brother to the neighborhood of London in 1728–29. Augustine Washing-

ton was looking after his English estates in 1729. What more natural than that the rest should follow?

While President, George Washington supplied by request to an English heraldry office a genealogical table of the American branch of his family. He wrote there: —

"Jane, wife of Augustine, died November 24, 1728, and was buried in the family vault at Bridge's Creek. Augustine then married Mary Ball, March 6, 1730."

In the same table is set down: "*George, eldest son of Augustine by the second marriage, was born in Westmoreland County.*"

The section I have italicized should — or so an unprejudiced person might suppose — settle definitively the question as to George Washington's nationality. Yet one historian speaks of it as "a mooted point." Lossing, after quoting from the genealogical table, subjoins, "There is no known official record that can solve the question," and pamphlets have been written to prove that the first chief magistrate of the country severed from the crown by his efforts was

born in England. It cannot be overlooked that, while the distinguished son is silent as to the place of the marriage, neither hinting that the ceremony was performed in England, nor asserting that it took place in America, he is explicit as to his birthplace, even naming the county. If he were not prime authority upon this point, especially when he sets his hand to a formal and important record, to what "official record" can we turn? How clear was his understanding of date and circumstances was further displayed in an entry made in his mother's Bible in his own handwriting when he was a lad of seventeen, or thereabouts. At sixteen he was one of Lord Fairfax's surveyors, and earning his own living among men double his age. It is altogether unlikely that he transcribed idly or ignorantly what is still to be read in round, careful characters in the volume faithfully preserved in the family: —

"George Washington, Son to Augustine and Mary his wife, was born ye 11th Day of February 173– about 10 in the morn-

ing and was baptized the 3th of April following, Mr. Beverley Whiting & Capt Christopher Brooks, Godfathers, & Mrs. Mildred Gregory, Godmother."

It ought to be needless to call attention to the extreme improbability that one so well instructed with regard to the very hour of the birth, the time of baptism, and the names of the sponsors, should err as to the more momentous question, On which side of the Atlantic did he first see the light? The marvel is that the matter should ever have been debated.

To recapitulate: conflicting legends are most easily reconciled by acceptance of Lossing's hypothesis that the contracting parties were married in England, probably from the house of Mary Ball's only surviving near kinsman, and, sailing from England within the year, were settled in the Westmoreland homestead between Bridge's and Pope's creeks before their first child was born. Unfortunately, the marriage and baptismal registers of the parish church at Cookham were destroyed before 1853, at

which time investigation of this matter was made, only the burial register having been saved.

Mrs. Ella Bassett Washington, a lineal descendant of "Betty" Lewis, Washington's only sister, and whose husband was a grandnephew of the great chieftain, echoes the general disappointment of biographical students when she remarks that, "Something more is due to the father of Washington than the mere mention of his personal appearance." Her reference to "careful reviews of Washington's ancestry, given in Sparks's and Irving's histories, tracing the family for six centuries in England," hardly contents those to whom every particular relating to the antecedents of our country's deliverer is fraught with intense interest. Still we cannot but admire the grace of the evasion with which Augustine Washington's very great-indeed-granddaughter would parry useless questionings: —

"Returning to Mary Ball's marriage and the query, 'Who was her husband?' nothing could be more emphatic than his own

solemn assertion made in the first sentence of his last will, 'I, Augustine Washington, of the County of King George, *Gentleman*.'"

The formula in this individual instance conveys all we would have it express — as far as it goes, but it goes a very little way. Every planter on the Northern Neck, or, for that matter, east of the Blue Ridge, used the words in cognate circumstances, and the probability is that they slipped from the notary's pen of their own weight. Common sense descries a stronger proof that he was the worthy sire of his magnificent son in the facts that John Washington was his grandfather, and that Mary Ball chose him as her husband. "Good blood does not lie," and the highest praise a man can receive is the love and trust a noble woman reposes in him when she lays her hand in his for the rest of their united lives. Our favorable judgment of the successful planter is based upon association and upon presumptive evidence rather than upon direct information.

Beyond the skeleton history which the best of biographers have only sufficed to indicate, not to sketch, there is little to tell where we would fain relate at length. *How* little is betrayed by the pertinacity with which relic-mad posterity reverts (especially upon the 22d of February, N. S.) to the mouldy vestige of what was, when new and whole, absurdly insufficient drapery for the frame of a moral lesson. That man or woman should not be allowed to go at large who dares, in the age that now is and to come, to tell in cold-blooded seriousness the story of the hatchet and the cherry-tree. The memory of father and of son is best honored by ignoring *in toto* the petty transaction in lumber that has made both ridiculous, and turned the stomachs of thousands of embryo citizens of our republic against truth-telling.

Descriptions of the home to which the well-to-do widower brought the bride who was ten years his junior are happily sufficiently full to aid us in arranging the setting for our heroine's new "cast." The

blunted point of the triangle formed by the creeks that furnished fat low-grounds on two sides of Augustine Washington's plantation of Wakefield rested upon the Potomac, and was a mile in width. Wakefield comprised a thousand acres of as fine wood and bottom lands as were to be found in a county "that by reason of the worth, talents, and patriotism that adorned it was called 'the Athens of Virginia.'" The house faced the Potomac, the lawn sloping to the bank between three and four hundred yards distant from the "porch," running from corner to corner of the dwelling. There were four rooms of fair size upon the first floor, the largest in a one-story extension at the back, being "the chamber." The hip-roof above the main building was pierced by dormer-windows that lighted a large attic. At each end of the house was a chimney built upon the outside of the frame dwelling, and of dimensions that made the latter seem disproportionately small. Each cavernous fireplace would hold a half cord of wood, and the leaping

blaze had all seasons for its own in a region where river fogs at evening and morning were vehicles of the dreaded "ague and fever." About the fireplace in the parlor were the blue Dutch tiles much affected in the decorative architecture of the time. What a priceless scrap of bric-à-brac to a modern collector would be one of those same enameled squares, bedight with a representation of *Abraham's Offering*, or *Moses Breaking the Tables of the Law*, the tents of Israel, like a row of sharp haystacks, almost touching his knees, although ostensibly dwarfed in perspective until the whole camp was smaller than the tablets he hurled to earth! — the tiles that once reflected rosily the thoughtful face of the young wife, and gave distorted images of the blonde giant, her nominal lord and master; that, by and by, missed the musing face and slighter figure for a time, and then showed a double picture, — a visage paler and sweeter than of old, bent over the baby that was, from the beginning, the image of his mother. In the one-storied chamber the

Moses of the New World was born, and the mother nursed the goodly child upon her bosom in gladness and pride of heart until the birth of the little Betty in June, 1733. Between the stepmother and the two sturdy sons of Mr. Washington's first marriage there existed cordial frendliness from the hour of her installation as mistress of the modest mansion. An elderly kinswoman had cared for them during their father's protracted absence, but with the recollection of their own mother, hardly two years dead, in their memories, it spoke well for the little fellows, as for the new mother, that they yielded her respectful duty. Her early life had made every detail of country housekeeping familiar to her. The retinue of servants was perhaps larger than that at Epping Forest had been, and the appointments of the house may have included relics of such grand living as had befitted Cave Castle, and went well with the stories, told over the logs on winter nights, of court-visits and royal preferment. Apostles of Democracy, though the Washingtons

called themselves, they were ingrain aristocrats, — the greatest of them not excepted. It was impossible for them then, as now, to forget the august procession of warriors and scholars who had borne high in peace and in war the emblem of the closed visor, the ducal coronet capped by a soaring raven, and the motto, pregnant with prophecy, — "*Excitus acta probat.*"

The one tragical incident in this chapter of Mary Washington's wedded life — a tale of tranquil happiness, Arcadian in simplicity and beauty — was the violent death of a girl visitor, an intimate friend of the mistress of the manor. The two women were sitting at supper together while a thunder-storm was raging, thoughtless of fear or danger, when a flash of lightning struck the young girl, melting the knife and fork in her hand, and killing her instantly. The nervous shock left ineffaceable traces upon the strong mind of Mrs. Washington. Courageous at all other times, she grew pale and sick at the approach of a thunder-storm, and at the first roll and gleam of the deadly

elements sought her own room or sat with closed eyes and folded hands, absorbed in silent prayer while it lasted. The electrical play restored in all its vividness the scene photographed by that scathing "flash light" upon brain and heart.

Mrs. Ella Bassett Washington recounts that, "On one occasion the daughter, missing her mother, and knowing how she suffered, found her kneeling by the bed with her face buried in the pillows, praying. Upon rising, she said, 'I have been striving for years against this weakness, for you know, Betty, my trust is in God; but sometimes my fears are stronger than my faith.'"

The Wakefield library was small, a straw of circumstantial evidence in support of the belief that the tastes of the handsome, athletic master were not intellectual. It was high noon of the Augustan age of English literature, and the Old Dominion, more than any other colony, was a faithful reflection of what went on in the mother-country. Mr. Cooke's picture of plantation life in the

eighteenth century, which he calls "The Golden Age of Virginia," is graphic and beautiful:—

"Care seemed to keep away from it and stand out of its sunshine. The planter in his manor-house, surrounded by his family and retainers, was a feudal patriarch, mildly ruling everybody. He drank wholesome wine, sherry or canary, of his own importation; entertained every one; held great festivities at Christmas, with huge log-fires in the great fireplaces around which the family clan gathered; and everybody, high and low, seemed to be happy. It was the life of the family, not of the great world, and produced that intense attachment for the soil which had become proverbial; which made a Virginian once say, 'If I had to leave Virginia, I would not know where to go.' . . . Such luxuries as were desired, books, wines, silks, and laces, were brought from London to the planter's wharf in exchange for his tobacco; and he was content to pay well for all, if he could thereby escape living in towns."

The precedence given, in the list of luxuries, to books is not accidental. William Evelyn Byrd's principality of Westover was, as the crow flies, less than seventy miles from Wakefield, and the stately suzerain's progresses included visits to the Rappahannock plantations and the cultivation of social relations with his brother magnates. The Byrd library was the finest in America, the owner the most accomplished man on this side of the sea, and there were few on the other side whose learning exceeded his. The Virginia planters and their families were usually omnivorous readers, and every country-house held a choice collection of classics to which every year brought additions. The masters of English essay and song were as well known in the new as in the old country; the portraits hung against whitewashed and wainscoted walls were by Hudson and Kneller and Vandyke; gentlemen and gentlewomen read together, with proper emphasis and discretion, the *Beggar's Opera*, and *Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *Paradise Lost*, in country-houses

in rainy weather, and got up masquerades and private theatricals at Christmas, and made polite talk of "Shakespeare and the musical glasses" as airily as did the belles and gallants of court circles in the motherland they never forgot.

All this being true, the fact that the bookshelves in the room with the Dutch-tiled chimney-piece held few except devotional works, while gratifying proof that the religious faith of the fathers had descended to the third and fourth generations, implies that the robust intellect of the wife was not likely to be lured to higher flights by the husband's example. The thrifty planter had set a thrifty wife and mistress over the Westmoreland home. Whatever may be said of him, it is certain that she left upon everything she handled the stamp of a vigorous personality. One biographer relates, casually, and not consciously in evidence of this, that one of the volumes in the Wakefield library — *Sir Matthew Hale's Contemplations, Moral and Divine* — had belonged to her predecessor Jane, and bore

upon the fly-leaf the signature of the first wife. Directly beneath this, the second put in her reversionary claim in full by inscribing "*and Mary Washington*" in characters that have a dogged assertiveness of their own to the imagination of the amused reader. Jane, *née* Butler, had had her day and opportunity. She had done with earthly belongings and helps. Mary wanted all the room she could get for growth and action.

This volume, worn by many readings and defaced — or embellished — by numerous marginal pencilings, was treasured by George Washington as long as he lived. One chapter, which we may fancy to ourselves the mother reading aloud to her sons on the many Sundays when there was no service in the parish church, is entitled — *Of the Vanity and Vexation which ariseth from Worldly Hope and Expectation.* It was a lesson she had learned by heart before she sat down in Jane Washington's place, or wrote her name beneath that traced by the fingers now mouldering in the vault on Bridge's Creek.

We note with respect, not unmixed with awe, that the essay *The Great Audit*, — the solemn searching of heart and summing up of and for himself of England's great and good chief-justice, — was used by the mother as a lesson to be committed to memory by her children. What pious prescience dictated for her eldest boy a study that closes with these words? —

"When Thy honor, or the good of my country was concerned, I then thought it was a seasonable time to lay out my reputation for the advantage of either, and to act with it, and by it, and upon it, to the highest, in the use of all lawful means. And upon such an occasion, the counsel of Mordecai to Esther was my encouragement: '*Who knoweth whether God hath not given thee this reputation and esteem for such a time as this?*'"

Baby Betty was but sixteen months old when, in November, 1734, a second son (Samuel) was added to the household group. Upon a windy April day in the following year, sparks were carried from a

burning brush-heap in the garden to the tinder-like shingles of the roof, which was in flames before the mishap was discovered. Mr. Washington was absent, and when satisfied that the efforts made by the negro men to save the building would be useless, the mistress set the example to the women of bringing out the furniture, clothing, and other articles of value and carrying them to a place of safety. This done, without wasting time in lamentation over the loss of the first home of her married life, she called all hands to assist in making up beds and getting supper ready in the kitchen, — a mere cabin that had not been seized upon by the flames.

## CHAPTER IV.

Instead of rebuilding upon the site of the burnt homestead, Augustine Washington removed his family and household effects to a plantation he owned in Stafford County. It was upon the Rappahannock River, and opposite the town of Fredericksburg. The situation was commanding, and the garden and orchard were in better cultivation than those they had left. The house was, like that at Wakefield, broad and low, with the same number of rooms upon the ground floor, one of them in the shed-like extension at the back, and the spacious attic was over the main building. Even the great chimneys were upon the same plan and of like proportions with those marking the spot where the older house had stood. The place was called by the family "Pine Grove," from a noble body of these trees near it, but was better

known in the surrounding country as "Ferry Farm." There was then no bridge over the Rappahannock, and communication was had with the town by the neighboring ferry.

The Washingtons' church connection was with Overwharton Parish. In Bishop Meade's chapter upon this we have an interesting letter from Hon. Peter V. Daniel, then Judge of the Supreme Court, written in 1855, which contains the only printed memorandum I have been able to find of "Hannah Ball, half-sister of Mary Ball, the mother of General George Washington." According to the distinguished jurist, who assuredly should have known whereof he wrote, she married his great-grandfather Rowleigh (*sic*) Travers, "one of the most extensive landed proprietors in that part of the country, and from them proceeded a long line of descendants." Judge Daniel remarks in conclusion, of Overwharton Parish which covered the narrow county of Stafford, that "the space of some eight or ten miles square comprised none but substan-

tial people, some of them deemed wealthy in their day, several of them persons of education, polish, and refinement."

Following the interesting clue thus offered, I have been so fortunate as to obtain from a living representative of the Daniel family a few additional and charmingly suggestive particulars relative to Mrs. Washington's near kinswoman.

"Hannah Ball was a half-sister of Mary Washington, and married Raleigh Travers (said to have been of the same blood as Sir Walter Raleigh). The daughter of Hannah (Ball) Travers married Peter Daniel. Their daughter, Hannah Daniel, it is said, once danced with General Washington, who gallantly expressed his pleasure at finding that he had such a pretty cousin."

The knowledge that Mrs. Washington in her new abode was in the same parish with her half-sister, and of Mrs. Travers's standing as wife of the American founder of a family distinguished in the later history of Virginia for breeding, learning, and eloquence, casts a pleasing light upon the mo-

tives that may have caused the removal of Augustine Washington to Stafford. Much happiness must have come to his wife through this step. She dwelt once more among her own people. Her attachments were powerful, as is often the case with natures that are reckoned undemonstrative by casual acquaintances. The rupture, one after another, of the ties that bound her to the home of her childhood knit but the more firmly the few that remained.

The newer, sweeter bonds of motherhood were increased by the birth of John Augustine Washington, in January, 1736; and of Charles, in May, 1738. Close upon his heels, in 1739, came a second baby-daughter, a joyful apparition after the successive advents of three boys. Mildred, named for the aunt who had stood sponsor for George, died when about fourteen months old, and Betty, now a winsome maid of seven, remained thenceforward the only daughter.

Before the ache in the mother's heart was dulled by time, the crowning grief of

her life fell upon her. Augustine Washington, like many other gentlemen of his day and habits, had suffered vicariously for the high living of his ancestors in repeated attacks of rheumatic gout. One is reminded that disregard of weather which prudent men would not brave is also, sometimes, hereditary, in reading that he contracted his last illness, as his more illustrious son fifty-six years afterward tempted his, by riding over his plantation for several hours in a cold rain-storm. In both cases, Nature's retribution was quick and awful. During the night succeeding his exposure, Mr. Washington was racked by excruciating pains, and with morning inflammation set in. In a week he died.

"Augustine Washington Departed this life ye 12th day of April, 1743, aged 49 years," is the last record upon the page that gives in brief the history of the joint life bounded by the wedding and the death day.

They took him back to Westmoreland County, and laid him in the vault upon Bridge's Creek.

It is in keeping with the apathy that prevails throughout the Southern, and in some of the Middle States, with respect to the last resting-places of those whom family and friends delighted to honor while living, that the Washington vault should to-day be as neglected and almost as undistinguishable from the surrounding fields as is the birthplace of George Washington. Forty years ago it was described as "in an open field, and uninclosed. A small space around it is covered with grass, briers, shrubs, and a few small trees. Itself can only be distinguished by the top of the brick arch which rises a little above the surface. The cavity underneath has been very properly filled up with earth to prevent the bones of the dead from being taken away by visitors who had thus begun to pillage it."

In reading this we must not forget that the family vault was reckoned a safe and a sacred repository for the precious dust committed to it when Mary Washington buried her dead out of her sight and, returning to the house thus suddenly bereft of the head,

gathered the fatherless children about her, and took up with both hands life as God had made it for her. She was thirty-seven years of age. Those who maintain that the circumstances of her widowhood moulded her character and habits, developing latent germs of intelligence and judgment, leave the matter of age out of sight. She was too mature to be put to school, even by affliction. What she was as the guardian of her husband's children and comptroller of his estates she had been before she was left alone. Association with him may have been a goodly staff; it was never a crutch. According to the reports of various contemporaries, she sustained her bereavement with Christian fortitude. One writer records that "she submitted to the Divine Will with the strength of a philosopher and the trustfulness of a Christian. . . . She seemed alike indifferent to the smitings of affliction and the tenderness of human sympathy. Above all the tumult of emotion she heard the commands of Duty, and obeyed them."

Others recount likewise the story that with the assumption of her weeds, features and bearing took on gravity and decision that never left them. There were five of her own children, — all under twelve years of age, whose guardian she was made by the terms of her husband's will. One clause of this instrument provokes us to a smile, chased away by a thoughtful frown: —

"It is my will that my said four sons' estates may be left in my wife's hand until they respectively attain the age of Twenty One years, *in case my said wife continues so long unmarried.*"

Frankly, we wish the thrifty planter who understood so well how to make and to keep money, and who had presumably trained the wife so much his junior in like wisdom, had left out this proviso. Should she, his discreet relict, at thirty-seven, imitate the example he, when three years younger than that, had set her, he should have been sure enough, after thirteen years of wedded trustfulness, of her sense of justice and her integrity, if not of her maternal

love, to confide the material interests of their boys to her hands. Let us hope that the grave-faced widow was as indifferent to the condition as she appeared to be. The second marriages of her own father and of her children's father may have accustomed her to contemplate these as probable contingencies, and reason may have arisen so far above sentimentality as to lead her to applaud the sagacity of her long-sighted spouse. The will was, in the main, equitable, and devised specifically more property than most of his acquaintances had supposed the testator to possess. The family had lived comfortably, but hardly luxuriously; extravagance was opposed to the principles of both husband and wife. The broad vein of thrift and the economical instincts that characterized the business dealings of their son George were as much an inheritance as his incorruptible integrity.

To Laurence Washington, a splendid young fellow of twenty-six, made by his father's death the head of the family, was bequeathed a larger fortune than to any other

of the heirs. To him fell the fine estate of Hunting Creek, — a name he afterward changed to "Mount Vernon," in compliment to a British admiral. It lay along the Potomac River, and contained twenty-five hundred acres. The fisheries connected with it were exceedingly valuable and the lands fertile. He received other real estate, and shares in the iron-works established by Governor Spotswoode and his brother-capitalists. Augustine had Wakefield and Heywood in Westmoreland. The Stafford property, including Pine Grove, fell to George; Samuel, John, and Charles had about seven hundred acres apiece, a tolerable portion for younger brothers. Betty's fortune was principally in money well-invested. The entire income of the five children Mary Ball had borne him was subject to her management during their minority.

Her only adviser in America was her step-son Laurence. The two were always firm friends, each recognizing the sterling worth of the other. With genuine good sense and feeling the second wife trained

her own children to look up to him as their father's representative, and his business conferences with her were as with another man. In her home she required no backing. Her will was law, her rules were a code from which there was no appeal. Life at Pine Grove differed little from what it had been in the father's day, except that the mother superintended the plantation work as well as that within doors. Nearly everything used upon the place was likewise raised and manufactured there. Cotton was then extensively cultivated in Virginia. It was gathered, spun, and woven under the mistress's eyes, the tedious process of picking out the seed being performed by the negro children. Wool was also a staple of the region, and every stage of the preparation of the fleece passed under the same vigilance, — washing, carding, spinning, and weaving into linsey-woolsey and stouter fabrics. Flax was raised, but in small quantities, and the little wheels, that now take their place among the curiosities of our parlors, whirled and buzzed under the

house-mother's foot when the heavier tasks of the day were done. The garments worn by the servants and the every-day clothes of the whites were cut out by her, or under her direction by seamstresses she had trained, and were made up in "the chamber," where she sat, like Lucretia, with her maids about her. Not a pound of sugar, or lard, not a quart of meal, or flour, or molasses, vinegar, cider, or whiskey was consumed in "the house," or kitchen, or "quarters," that had not been weighed or measured by her. All commodities were kept under lock and key, and her key-basket of stout wickerwork, lined and covered with leather, went with her everywhere but to church. On Sundays it was locked up in a closet, and she carried the closet key at her girdle, with silver-handled scissors, pincushion, and nutmeg grater.

Except in cases of dangerous illness, she was physician and apothecary whenever medical aid was required upon the plantation; head-nurse, let the sufferer be her own child, or a field-hand at the farthest "quar-

ter," — watching for whole nights together over the sick or dying, and administering every dose of medicine with her own hands. The pickling, preserving, and potting of a private family was a formidable undertaking a century before "canned goods" were put upon the market; the killing and curing season, when bacon was "put up" by the thousand and tens of thousands of pounds, was a gigantic enterprise achieved annually. All these concerns in all their details the mistress of a plantation carried upon her mind. The negroes were no better than grown-up children, and she bore their cares and assumed the responsibilities of their physical, moral, and spiritual condition.

It was a stern period in domestic government, — and what wonder? Children feared, in honoring the parents who had well-nigh the power of life and death over them. The household was an absolute monarchy. The child who seated himself in the presence of mother or father, unless bidden to do so, would have been ordered from the room by the one, or knocked down by the other.

He spoke when spoken to, and respectfully; he wore what was put upon him, and until he was twenty-one came and went at the parental command, as mindlessly as a machine. It is not true, although often asserted, that the system of slavery was responsible for this state of affairs at the South. In Puritan New England the like prevailed, and with greater severity. It was the temper of a comparatively rude people, and of a time when the Old Testament was more read than the New. The process made stout wood of growing natures that were not too delicate to endure it. If the result were the survival of the fittest the survivors were very fit for the work of the age and of the world.

Laurence Washington was married, on the 19th of the July succeeding his father's death, to Anne Fairfax, the wedding having been postponed in consequence of that event. The bride's father, Hon. William Fairfax, was the master of Belvoir, an elegant estate adjoining Mount Vernon, which last-named place became the home of the newly wedded pair.

The influence of this alliance with the Fairfaxes upon the character and destiny of George Washington was great. How wholesome was the tendency of the intimacy that grew up between Laurence's father-in-law and the promising "big boy" may be surmised from an extract of a letter introduced here, — not in chronological sequence, but to illustrate the nature of the counsels given by the older of the friends, and the material upon which these wrought. Washington was at the age of twenty-two in command of a camp at Fort Necessity, among the Alleghanies, guarding an important pass against the French and Indians. William Fairfax writes to him as to an equal and coadjutor: —

"I will not doubt your having public prayer in the camp, especially when the Indian families are your guests, that they, seeing your plain manner of worship, may have their curiosity to be informed why we do not use the ceremonies of the French, which, being well-explained to their understandings, will more and more dispose them

to receive our baptism and unite in strict bonds of cordial friendship."

This is another crevice-ray that strikes unexpectedly across the subject we are considering, bringing into relief that which we could not spare without doing injustice to the harmonious whole. At Laurence's marriage and removal to his own home, the patriarchal duty of saying grace at meals and reading prayers night and morning would have devolved upon the next eldest son. Knowing, as we do, the strict rules that guided the household of her who was henceforward called "Madam Washington," we cannot doubt that to the eleven-year-old boy the task was assigned, and that it was performed with solemn decorum. In a treatise upon the *Religious Opinions and Character of Washington*, Rev. E. C. McGuire, of Fredericksburg, invites notice to the truth that the child was baptized "at a time when care was taken to instruct the children in our holy religion, according to the Scriptures as set forth in the standards of the Episcopal Church," and transcribes

certain passages from a set of "Resolutions" drawn up privately for his own use by Madam Washington's oldest son when but thirteen years of age. One is: "When you speak of God or His attributes, let it be seriously, in reverence."

Another: "Labour to keep alive in your heart that little spark of celestial fire called conscience."

Again: "Let your conversation be without malice or envy, for it is a sign of a tractable and commendable nature, and in all causes of passion admit reason to govern."

Whether this code, which embraces rules for the government of behavior in company, at table, and in business, be a compilation from various (to us) unknown sources, or — what is scarcely credible — the composition of the lad himself, it is a remarkable paper, as betraying depth and steadiness of character almost unparalleled in one of his years.

From birth, the imprint of the stronger natured parent was upon her firstborn, — the man she felt she had gotten from the

Lord. He was emphatically, although not in the sentimental significance usually attached to the phrase, "a mother's boy." In later years he expressed his appreciation of this vital truth in blunt, sincere terms he might have learned from herself. "All that I am I owe to my mother" is one of the best-known of his sayings.

I have written thus far to little purpose if I have not made it plain that this woman, upon whom was laid the charge of an immense estate and the education of five children, had no store of what are rated as polite accomplishments. Whatever may have been the promise of personal graces in her comparatively careless youth, she was now neither brilliant nor handsome. Life was a terribly earnest matter with her, and her demeanor showed that she felt it to be such. She had never been idle or self-indulgent. After her husband's death doubled her daily duties she became a proverb for incessant diligence. Every minute of her waking hours was filled with a specific task. Method became almost

mania. It followed, inevitably, that she was a strict task-mistress, disposed to be as intolerant of indolence as of sin. Her carriage was upright, her manner dignified; although not talkative, she expressed herself clearly and with force, and her choice of words would have done credit to many a queen of polite society. A nephew of her husband — Laurence Washington, of Chotank — writing many years afterward of this period of her life, has left us his impressions of his uncle's widow: —

"I was often here [at Pine Grove] with George, his playmate, schoolmate, and young man's companion. Of the mother, I was more afraid than of my own parents; she awed me in the midst of her kindness; and even now, when time has whitened my locks and I am the grandfather of a second generation, I could not behold that majestic woman without feelings it is impossible to describe."

Another, whose opportunities of intimate acquaintance with her disposition and habits were ample, has recorded that "there

was a plain honesty and truth about her, peculiar to that age, and which has been ill exchanged for empty professions and outward polish. As a native of Virginia, she was hospitable by birthright, and always received her visitors with a smiling welcome; but they were never asked to stay but once, and she always speeded the parting guest by affording every facility in her power. She possessed all those domestic habits and qualities which confer value on woman, but had no desire to be distinguished by other titles than those of a good wife and mother."

To this date belongs the story of the sorrel colt which George, probably in conscious emulation of Alexander, determined to master. The experiment ended in the death of the fiery young horse, who broke a blood-vessel in a futile attempt to dislodge the lad from his back. It so chanced that the mother's first question when her son and his companions returned to the house was whether or not they had seen the sorrel colt. Mr. Custis and Dr. Lossing have combined to thrust a speech into the cul-

prit's mouth, which no boy, even of that stilted day, ever delivered as an impromptu; but in whatever style he replied, the facts were told, promptly and squarely. The widow struggled for a second with the temper she had not lost in passing it down to her child, then replied to the effect that she was sorry the horse was dead, but glad that her boy had spoken the truth.

The anecdote, albeit but a trifle less threadbare than the hatchet myth, is a representative incident, and not to be omitted from the history of mother or son.

## CHAPTER V.

Brother Joseph, the London barrister, who would seem to have been masterful by nature, became a trifle pragmatical with the advance of years, a foible his sister did not suspect, or which she was willing to overlook in consideration of his relationship to herself and the guardianly office he had once held. She had consulted him as to the terms of settlement of certain accounts of the estate with Laurence Washington at the time of her step-son's marriage, and had taken his advice, which was wise and just. She applied to him for counsel in a matter of more vital interest when George was fourteen years old.

Laurence Washington had served as captain in a Virginia regiment under General Wentworth and Admiral Vernon, in the united attack of naval and land forces upon Cartagena, South America, in 1741. Im-

paired health, the consequence of illness contracted during the siege, hindered the fulfillment of his intention of joining the British army, and making the profession of arms his life-work. The Rappahannock plantations and Fredericksburg, the one town of consequence upon the river, have always furnished a quota of men and officers to the navy far in excess of what might be considered their natural proportion of seafaring people. One might suppose that the conditions, physical or mental, of the region are peculiarly favorable to the development of a longing for maritime adventure. With his mother's sanction, George Washington paid many and long visits to Mount Vernon, she judging sensibly that the society gathered about her favorite step-son and his charming wife would be a liberal education for the fast-growing country-boy. There, and at Belvoir, he met English and colonial military men, officers of the army and navy, and the martial fire that had glowed in his English ancestor John, and warmed the

pulses of the half-brother he loved and revered, was kindled in the listener's heart, while the veterans fought their battles over again, and predicted other struggles before permanent peace could be assured.

After each of these visits he went back to his mother with the eager petition that she would allow him to enter the British navy, a request seconded by Laurence's powerful influence. The mother hesitated and argued, — an unusual course of action in one so prompt to decide, so energetic in deed. But she must have seen ere this that the eldest of her brood was an eaglet who could not long be detained in the nest. He was tall for his fourteen years, remarkably robust and fearless of hardships. In the steady purpose to attain a thorough education, after learning all that could be taught him in an "old field school," — kept by Hobby, pedagogue and sexton, and the most conceited man in three parishes, — the lad made a daily journey on horseback in winter and summer to what was considered a better school among the hills ten

miles away, and the next year rowed morning and evening in the roughest weather across the river to the Fredericksburg Academy, the same in which two other Presidents, Madison and Monroe, were afterward prepared for college. That he would have a career in a day when history was in making was evident, and the mother, if not ambitious for him, was so far in sympathy with his restlessness under the limitations of his present life that she hearkened patiently to his arguments, reinforced by those of Laurence Washington, Mr. Fairfax, and the family physician, who represented the advantages of an active life in the open air for her boy. She had written to her brother shortly after the subject was broached, but his answer was delayed so long that before receiving it she yielded to the combined pressure brought to bear upon her.

The lad's midshipman's warrant in the British navy was procured in the winter of 1746–47 by the influence of his half-brother, and preparations were begun, gayly

by George, sadly enough by his mother, for his outfit and departure.

Still another side-light falls athwart a feature of Madam Washington's character that proves her mortal, and for once neither unlike nor superior to the majority of mothers. Mr. Robert Jackson, of Fredericksburg, the friend of both parties to the controversy, writes confidentially to Laurence Washington : —

"I am afraid Mrs. Washington will not keep up to her first resolution. She seems to dislike George's going to sea, and says several persons have told her it was a bad scheme. She offers several trifling objections, such as a fond, unthinking mother habitually suggests, and I find that one word against his going has more weight than ten for it."

Mr. Robert Jackson was very man, and an audacious one at that, in that he could couple the phrase "fond, unthinking mother" with the name of the Spartan parent who, having put personal preference behind her, honestly believed that she scanned the

projected "scheme" critically for her child's sake, and that alone. She knew the perils to morals and to life attendant upon the profession selected for him, and had before her a living evidence of some of these in the condition of Laurence dying by inches of pestilence-poison taken into his system during the horrible experiences of Cartagena, when thousands of his comrades died of the plague. If she lent ear to what "several persons" said, it was because her heart trembled, and her judgment had been convinced against her will by the impassioned pleadings of her boy, and the calmer advocacy of his cause on the part of men of the world who held Mr. Jackson's views as to women's ability to see both sides of a question, and to weigh evidence.

While in this distressing incertitude, she received the long-expected letter from Brother Joseph. It was dated May 19, 1747, and couched in the barrister's most characteristic style: —

"I understand that you are advised and have some thoughts of putting your son

George to sea. I think he had better be put apprentice to a tinker, for a common sailor before the mast has by no means the common liberty of the subject; for they will press him from ship to ship, where he has fifty shillings a month, and make him take twenty-three, and cut and slash and use him like a negro, or rather like a dog. And as to any considerable preferment in the navy, it is not to be expected, as there are so many gaping for it here who have interest, and he has none. And if he should get to be master of a Virginia ship (which is very difficult to do), a planter who has three or four hundred acres of land, and three or four slaves, if he be industrious, may live more comfortably, and have his family in better bread than such a master of a ship can. . . .

"He must not be too hasty to be rich, but go on gently and with patience as things will naturally go. This method, without aiming at being a fine gentleman before his time, will carry a man more comfortably and surely through the world than

going to sea, unless it be a great chance indeed. I pray God to keep you and yours.

"Your loving brother,

"JOSEPH BALL."

Either the lad's mother, who never put pen to paper if she could help it, had failed to make clear what were George's prospects and desires, or the conservative cockney had read the letter carelessly. The epistle bristles with British prejudice, and, in its almost brutal frankness, is a painful suggestion of what had been his sister's life while a member of his household, and under his command. His contempt for provincial opinions and ambitions matches his ignorance of the real state of affairs in the colony in which he was born. Notwithstanding his many visits to Virginia, and his pecuniary interest in her improvement, he had no appreciation of her progress during the last quarter-century. Ah! if that finest of old Virginia gentlemen — William Byrd — impregnable in the conviction that his State was the goodliest land the sun ever

shone upon, and exultant in presages of her glorious future, could have sat down opposite the dogmatic lawyer in the Westover drawing-room, and, transfixing him with his shining dark eyes, — have had his way with him for an hour! It would have been the encounter of stag-hound and bull-terrier. What did the Londoner reck of the brilliant gatherings at Belvoir and Mount Vernon, when men before whom he and his fellow-citizens would have stood cap-in-hand encouraged the ardent boy in his hopes and spurred his mettled spirit; how guess — when he said flatly of governmental influence, "*He* has none" — at the midshipman's commission obtained for his provincial nephew by the fond brother, whose dear friend was Admiral Vernon, and whose companion-in-arms was General Wentworth? How was he to divine that the raw lad who, he advised, should be bound to a tinker sooner than have his way, and whom he cautioned patronizingly against being a fine gentleman before his time, was already the favorite companion

of Thomas Lord Fairfax, a peer of the realm, an Oxonian by education, a member of the *Spectator Club*, and the owner of all the lands in the Northern Neck, between the Rappahannock and the Potomac, and the Blue Ridge and the Chesapeake?

It is a woeful pity that we have no record or tradition of the manner in which the nephews and their allies received this astonishingly bumptious and fatuous communication. It must have read to them like impertinent fustian, that would have been beneath contempt but for the effect it had upon George's mother. Respect for and obedience to Brother Joseph had grown into her character during the formative time passed under his shadow at Epping Forest. He would ever be to her loyal soul the chief of her clan. Her clear eyes could not but see that he was fighting as wildly as a blindfolded bruiser, his heaviest blows beating the air; but the remembered crack of the whip appealed to memory and conscience, and, wise head though hers was, the babble of press-gangs and floggings

had some effect, if only because it echoed her own boding dreams. She made up her mind upon the spot. No time was to be lost. George had his uniform, the natty midshipman's cap, and in the belt the jaunty little dirk, that gave it the true martial touch. His luggage was on board of a British man-of-war moored in the Potomac. To-morrow her eaglet would have flown. Armed with Brother Joseph's letter, she sought his presence and refused positively to let him go. When he rebelled, for the first time in his life, and passed from argument to pleading, her rare tears burst forth; the "fond, unthinking mother" eclipsed the rigid matron, and the son, terrified by her emotion, bowed to her will.

Barrister Joseph builded better than he knew, but while America owes her freedom to his besotted pugnacity, gratitude is due, not to him, but to the Divine Wisdom that makes the stupidity as well as the wrath of man to praise Him for his wonderful works to the children of men.

After what the mother-heart must often

have reckoned a Pyrrhian victory over the dearest wishes of the gallant boy whose filial obedience under the crucial test enhanced her appreciation of his noble nature, Madam Washington suffered him to spend most of his time with the half-brother who shared his disappointment. She would not thwart him again when opposition could be avoided, and a common chagrin had knit the brothers' hearts yet more closely together. In the effort to overcome his regrets at the frustration of his best hopes, George turned with redoubled diligence to the study he liked best, that of mathematics. His mother gladly engaged a private tutor for him in the higher branches of the science, and under him George learned what was his first step to success, — land surveying. At sixteen, through the Fairfax influence, he received the extraordinary — considering his years — appointment of public surveyor. In the practice of his profession he resided at Mount Vernon, visiting his mother often, and gradually taking Laurence's place as manager and adviser.

It is to his eternal honor that not an intimation is given by contemporary or subsequent historians that the painful episode, to him approximating a tragedy, tinged with bitterness his feelings toward her who had given him birth. He was her staunch champion then and ever. She was his mother, — therefore always right.

He held Governor Dinwiddie's commission as major, and was drawing $750 per annum as commandant of a military position, when a call nearer home diverted thought and service. The gallant fight made by his best-beloved brother against the insidious malady that was undermining his system was near its end. Accompanied by George, he sailed for the West Indies in the autumn of 1751, and, continuing to fail after his arrival, sent back his brother to bring his wife to him. He returned to Mount Vernon in June, 1752, and lived but a few weeks longer. He was buried at Mount Vernon.

Three out of the four children born of this marriage had preceded the father into

the other world. Evidently comprehending that the survivor must share the fate of the rest by reason of inherent delicacy of constitution, he directed in his will that in case of her demise without issue, Mount Vernon should become the property of his brother George. Within the year the youthful major received a legacy he must have accepted with an aching heart. Short space was allowed him for enjoyment of his new possessions. In 1753, although only one-and-twenty years of age, he was appointed by Robert Dinwiddie, then governor of the State of Virginia, to be the bearer of dispatches to the French commander St. Pierre. The route designated for the envoy and his small party was through a wild and savage country; the month, November. He called to see his mother on the way to Williamsburg, and explained to her the nature of his mission. She heard and questioned him calmly, offering no objections to the enterprise she saw was fraught with peril. With her farewell kiss she bade him "remember that

God only is our sure trust. To Him I commend you."

In the strength of that trust she awaited with outward tranquillity the passage of the forty-odd days that elapsed before her hero presented himself in her presence with the news of the triumphs of the little expedition.

In 1755 came a summons from the newly-arrived General Braddock, who was sent to America to put an end to the French and Indian warfare that threatened the existence of the colonies. The fame of the Virginia colonel reached him as soon as he landed in America, and he offered an honorable and flattering command to the ambitious youth. Before accepting it, Washington held another conference with his mother. The news of the offer, tempting to him and terrifying to her, drove her to pay a hasty visit to Mount Vernon.

It is surprising that artist and poet have passed over this interview in the quest for the picturesque in American history. Mount Vernon was one of the notable plan-

tation houses of the riverside, although less spacious than now, and the proprietor was the rising man of the colony. A portrait of him in his colonel's uniform is that of a magnificently built man with a kingly port and face. The birthright of leadership was stamped upon him; his manners had already the serious dignity that distinguished him as Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army, and President of the United States. Upon his return from the interview with Braddock, he was met upon the threshold of his home by his mother. She was now in her fiftieth year, and clad plainly, in widow's weeds. Without preamble, she opened the case with a strenuous appeal to him not to risk a life so dear to her and so valuable to his country in an expedition led by the dashing Irishman, whose renown for reckless bravery had preceded him. Important interests in county and colony required the services of one of the largest landholders in the region. Surely another could better do Braddock's bidding than fill George Washington's place

should his life be sacrificed to a mistaken sense of duty.

Her words of truth and soberness had weight with the listener. Two days passed before he determined to adhere to his original design. He began the final discussion respectfully and affectionately, but the steadfast soul from which he had drawn his own must have perceived from the outset the futility of further opposition. He took the ground on which he could meet her on most nearly equal terms, — that of the choice of duties. Granting full weight to all that she had said, he represented his country's need of him, and why he had been selected for this especial work. The public weal should overbalance, in the patriot's mind, the demands of self-interest and local concerns. The safety, and perhaps the very existence of the colonies, depended in his judgment upon immediate concert of action. All the trained forces at the command of the government should be massed at a given point, and advance upon the enemy under officers approved for

skill and valor. He believed that such a policy would be followed by speedy defeat and dispersion of the forces gathering upon the frontier.

She hearkened attentively and mutely, doubtless with natural pride in the gallant speaker that upbore the sinking heart, and unable to repress a thrill of admiration at the address with which he finally turned her own words upon her: —

"The God to whom you commended me, Madam, when I set out upon a more perilous errand, defended me from all harm, and I trust He will do so now. Do not you?"

We can fancy the rare, humorous gleam that, we are told, gave a peculiarly arch expression to her features, stealing over them at this adroit touch. The allusion to the Power which, she had taught him from babyhood, guided the honest soul into the path of right and safety, could not be gainsaid. She had supplied him with the weapons with which he overcame her. It was the last severe conflict between the two master-wills. With candor that matched his,

she refrained from further remonstrance, and declared herself convinced that he was in the right.

We are irresistibly reminded in reading of the momentous debate, and the result of it, of that conference of the disciples in the house of Philip of Cæsarea, when the pleadings of those who loved him were stayed by the chiefest Apostle with an impassioned outbreak from a tried, yet resolute soul: —

"'*What do ye, weeping and breaking my heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but to die at Jerusalem.*'

"*And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying,* '*The will of the Lord be done!*'"

This was the thought uppermost in Mary Washington's mind, as she went back to the Ferry Farm and the duties that awaited her there.

This was in April, 1755; the monotonous round of plantation-life was soon broken by stirring news of the formation of the famous Braddock expedition, and the departure for the seat of war. On July 9 occurred

the terrible defeat of the British and Colonial forces. Of sixty odd officers, Washington was the only one who escaped unharmed, and the report that he had fallen on the field of battle was the first tidings of the eventful day that reached his mother. In what agony of desolation she awaited particulars of her bereavement; what struggles went on in the chastened soul between knowledge of the blow dealt by the God whom she had trusted and faith not to be shaken from its hold, are left to us to conjecture. Almost a fortnight elapsed before mourning was turned into thanksgiving by the receipt of a letter written by the beloved hand, dated July 18, and sent by special messenger from Fort Cumberland.

It began, "Honored Madam."

It was his invariable custom thus to address his mother upon paper. It was one of the ways of that day, which he and men like him helped to make. Whatever might be the clash of opinion between them; however strongly the parent, in her linsey skirt, short jacket, and mob-cap, might contrast

with the elegant dames who strove for his favor, she was ever "honored" in his thought and in his speech. A sovereign in her own right, she commanded his perpetual allegiance.

The letter gave a succinct account of the disaster, and recounted the circumstances of his almost miraculous escape, "although I had four bullets through my coat and two horses shot under me." He mentions, too, an illness prior to the fight, of which she had not heard, that had confined him to bed and wagon for above ten days, and from which he was "not half-recovered" when he went into action. He fears that in the necessity of halting for some days to recover strength to proceed homeward, and the probability that he will not be able to stir from Mount Vernon until towards September, he will not have the pleasure of seeing her until then, and subscribes himself thus: —

"I am, honored Madam, your most dutiful son."

His mother had, also, the solemn joy of

reading in his letter, written on the same day to her step-son, Augustine, the acknowledgment that "by the all-powerful protection of Providence I have been protected beyond all human probability or expectation."

She did not wait for him to come to her upon his return to Mount Vernon, late in July, but hastened to see and nurse him. His robust frame was in a state of pitiable exhaustion, but his spirit was unbroken. To her tender expostulations against the sacrifice of health, fortune, and perhaps life, he pleaded the patriot's obligation not to fail his country in the hour of extremity. She was back in her home when he wrote to her, under the date of August 14: —

"Honored Madam, — If it is in my power to avoid going to Ohio again, I shall, but if the command is pressed upon me by the general voice of the country, and offered upon such terms as cannot be objected against, it would reflect dishonor upon me to refuse it, and that, I am sure must, or ought to give you greater uneasiness than

my going in an honorable command. Upon no other terms will I accept it."

They understood one another by now. She had the good sense to accept the fact that her boy was a man, and the best judge of his own affairs. Henceforward she gave him fullest sympathy, how intelligent may be gathered from such letters as the above.

## CHAPTER VI.

LATER in the eventful year, 1755, the spirit of worldly wisdom moved Brother Joseph to write to the nephew whom he had hectored indirectly, and patronized directly, eight years before. As both of his letters were preserved by the Washingtons, we indulge the hope that George and the Fairfaxes had the satisfaction of comparing them, and derived as much wicked enjoyment from the act as men in this unsaintly century would feel in like circumstances.

"STRATFORD, 5th of September, 1755.

"GOOD COUSIN, — It is a sensible pleasure to me to hear that you have behaved yourself with such a martial spirit in all your engagements with the French, nigh Ohio. Go on as you have begun, and God prosper you."

We are credibly informed that Washington had a fine sense of humor. He used to

laugh at Nelly Custis's jokes, and smile benignantly, with a twinkle in his eye, upon his little wife when she brought him down from the heights of political lucubrations to the levels of commonplace matters by hooking her finger in his buttonhole; and there are many playful, some sarcastic touches in his correspondence. A grim smile must have illumined his sedateness when he reached this benediction: —

"We have heard of General Braddock's defeat. Everybody blames his rash conduct. Everybody commends the courage of the Virginia and Carolina men, which is very agreeable to me. [!] I desire you, as you may have opportunity, to give me a short account how you proceed. I am your mother's brother. I hope you will not deny my request. I heartily wish you good success, and am,

"Your loving uncle,

"JOSEPH BALL.

"TO MAJOR GEORGE WASHINGTON,

"*At the Falls of Rappahannock, or elsewhere in Virginia.*

"*Please direct for me at Stratford-by-Bow, nigh London.*"

No talk now of "going on gently and with patience, as things would naturally go," or cautions against "being a fine gentleman before his time." We may be sure, from the urgent plea for a few words from his "good cousin's" hand, how the worthy cockney would strut from villa to villa of the suburban neighborhood, and invade the dingy offices of the Middle Temple, and buttonhole acquaintances at the street corners, to show those "words," if they were ever written to his "mother's brother."

The leal sister shut her eyes to his weaknesses, perhaps because better informed as to his virtues than we. In 1759 — after her son's five years' service in the army, his election to the House of Burgesses, and resignation of his position of Commander-in-Chief of the Virginia forces, his marriage to Mrs. Custis, and settlement as a family-man at Mount Vernon — Madam Washington wrote by private hand to her now venerable mentor: —

"I inquire by all opportunity from you, and am glad to hear you and my sister,

and Mr. Downman and his lady [Brother Joseph's daughter and her husband] keep your health so well. I sometimes hear you intend to see Virginia once more. I should be proud to see you. I have known a great deal of trouble since I saw you: there was no end to my trouble while George was in the army, but he has now given it up."

The sigh of relief in the last sentence was the prelude to over a dozen years of peaceful enjoyment of domestic life in the homes upon the Rappahannock and the Potomac. All the sons were married; Samuel had settled in Stafford County; John in Westmoreland; Charles in Spottsylvania; Augustine, the surviving step-son, had been established for several years upon the old plantation on Pope's Creek. Grandchildren were growing up about Madam Washington's knees; her business-affairs were prosperous. Lossing and Mrs. Ella Bassett Washington affirm that George's marriage brought delight to his mother; the former authority that "the social position, the fortune, and the lively character of the bride were extremely

satisfactory to Mary Washington." Betty Lewis's great-granddaughter says more briefly that "the mother rejoiced in the son's happiness." We note with gratification this coincidence of evidence, because rumors have gained credence that between the Custises and the plainer matron of Pine Grove, there was never perfect accord; that the Dowager Madam Washington had little in common with the beautiful heiress, and that their intercourse never approximated intimacy. I shall take greater pleasure in inserting in due order of the narrative an extract from the pen of Martha Washington's grandson, that ought to kill these detractions beyond the fear of resuscitation.

Mary Washington's tasks were essentially domestic, and as child after child left her home for his or her own, she became an inveterate "home-body." The plantation could not get on without her, and the children were always more than welcome to come to her. Her doors and heart were open to them and the babies. She began to call herself "an old woman," although she

remitted not one jot of the work, and her upright figure, brisk step, and alert eye belied the phrase. To this season of outward prosperity and inward tranquillity belongs one of the few letters preserved for our inspection. It is, for a wonder, given unedited as to orthography, and is the more welcome on that account. Educators maintain that spelling, like the use of the fork, must be learned before the age of fifteen, or not at all. We bethink ourselves of the four years' dearth of schoolmasters in Westmoreland, during the early girlhood of the Belle of the Northern Neck, and are impressed by the royal disregard of arbitrary rules manifest in the composition. Writing was hard work, and she wasted not a word or stroke. Since it had to be done, she did it, and contrived to leave no doubt as to her meaning. The address is to "*Mr. Joseph Ball, Esquire. At Stratford-by-Bow, nigh London.*"

"*July* 2, 1760.

"DEAR BROTHER, — This comes by Captain Nicholson. You seem to blame me for not writeing to you, butt I doe ashure you

it is Note for the want of a very great regard for you and the family, butt as I dont ship tobacco, the Captains never call on me, soe that I never know when tha com or when tha goe. I believe that you have got a very good overseer at this quarter now. Captain Newton has taken a large lease of ground from you which I deare say, if you had been hear yourself, it had not been don. Mr. Daniel, and his wife and family, is well; Cozin Hannah has been married and lost her husband. She has one child, a boy. Pray give my love to Sister Ball, Mr. Downman, his son-in-law, his Lady. I am Deare Brother,

"Your loving sister,

"MARY WASHINGTON."

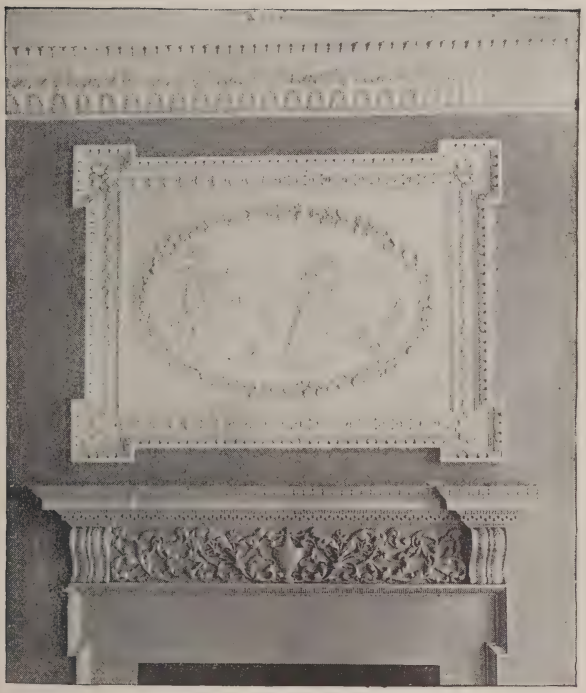
Several interesting and characteristic particulars present themselves in what sounds like a trite communication. Brother Joseph had taken her to task for remissness in correspondence. Simply, and with no haste of self-vindication or show of wounded feeling, she assures him of her unabated regard for himself and family, and gives the all-suffi-

cient reason for her apparent negligence. The shipment of Virginia's great staple had made some of her neighbors rich, and beggared others. Without having so much as heard of the *Essay on Bulk Tobacco* presented to "the Honorable Commissioners of their Majesties Customs," in 1692, by the "Merchant Masters of Ships and Traders to Virginia and Maryland," our shrewd woman of affairs knew it to be an expensive and treacherous crop, subject to perils often from weather, worms, and smugglers, and she exported none in bulk or parcel. The captains of outgoing crafts knew her views on this point, and gave her wharf a wide berth, and she was too much occupied in minding her own business to concern herself with their coming and going. The front windows of the Pine Grove house overlooked the river and Fredericksburg wharf where all the vessels touched. She must have been singularly void of idle curiosity not to keep some watch upon the passing sails.

She speaks a good word for the absen-

tee's overseer, but opines dryly that Captain Newton would not have been his tenant had he been on the spot to look into matters for himself. Cozin Hannah is probably the daughter of William Ball, their father's brother, the Hannah who married Daniel Fox. With old-fashioned courtesy, she names the members of Brother Joseph's family, and prays that her love may go to each. The signature is more sloping and in bolder sort than the "*Mary Ball*" affixed to the seventeen-year-old girl's epistle. This same year, Betty Washington, a beautiful woman, whose portrait, preserved at the ancestral seat of the Lewises at Marmion, Virginia, bears a striking resemblance to her distinguished brother, was married to a wealthy widower, Colonel Fielding Lewis, of Gloucester. He owned much real estate in and around Fredericksburg, and that his wife might be near her mother, set about building Kenmore, a splendid residence for those times. It was then in the suburbs of the busy little shipping-town which afterwards grew out to and beyond it.

Kenmore is still one of the show-places of Fredericksburg. When I visited it in May of the present year (1892), it was in excellent preservation, having been purchased and "restored" by people appreciative of the associations that cluster about it. The decorations of wainscot and ceilings are elaborate and curious. When the present occupants took possession, the dining-room walls were so defaced by the grime that had accumulated during the years in which it was used as a kitchen, that the noble wainscot and fretted ceiling were a surprise to the spectators of the revelations made by the cleaner's brush. Over the mantel in the drawing-room, an apartment of noble dimensions and ornamentation, is a remarkable fresco, said to have been designed by George Washington, at the request of his sister, the invention of her artists having "given out." It is in what is know as "putty-work," or plastic stucco, and represents in low relief several scenes from Æsop's Fables, — the crow with the lump of cheese in his mouth, and the wheedling fox beneath the



BAS-RELIEF OVER DRAWING-ROOM MANTEL AT KENMORE

tree; the wolf accusing the lamb of fouling the water; and other less conspicuous tokens of the warrior's familiarity with the celebrated classic. The workmanship of the whole is decidedly foreign. The story runs that it was executed by certain Italians, who, having enlisted in the French army, were taken prisoners in America, and remained there after peace was declared.

Betty Lewis has hardly had the attention from her mother's and brother's biographers that should be awarded to the tender devotion she showed to her surviving parent, and which her charms of person and character merited. We are indebted to her letters for some of the pleasantest glimpses of Mary Washington's home-life; and the reverent affection of her children proved her rare virtues as mother, wife, and woman.

This tranquil middle period of our heroine's existence was disturbed by the muttering of the war-cloud upon the Northern horizon. With sad, and, as was proved, correct forebodings that it would be long before peace was restored, Washington, before setting

out to take charge of the Colonial troops after the battle of Bunker Hill, begged his mother to leave the river-farm and take a house in Fredericksburg. Mrs. Lewis followed up his representations of the danger of her present residence by urgent invitation to their parent to accept a home at Kenmore for the remainder of her natural life.

Mary Washington never showed her sterling sense more clearly than in declining, gratefully, gently, and firmly, the inconsiderately generous offer. She had been a widow for thirty-two years, accustomed to her own home, her own servants, and her own manner of life. The spirit and habit of command were strong within her, and the ways of her simple establishment had unfitted her to occupy a visitor's place in any other, especially in the elegant home in which the wealthy merchant had placed her daughter.

"My wants in this life are few," she replied to her daughter's fond importunity, "and I feel perfectly competent to take care of myself."

To Colonel Fielding Lewis's proposal

that he should relieve her of the labor of going back and forth to the Ferry Farm and overseeing the plantation, she said: —

"You can keep my books, for your eyesight is better than mine; but leave the management of the farm to me."

It was not then so well understood as now that inaction and rust are synonyms to one who has passed his fiftieth birthday. Had Madam Washington resigned her stirring life, full, for every waking hour of the day, with specific duties; had exchanged the daily drive over the plantation, and the countless errands into the outer air, inseparable from the business of managing a farm, for the luxurious ease of Kenmore, a seat in the softest chair in the warmest corner of the hearth, and no livelier interests in what went on about her than such as a well-to-do gentlewoman far on in the sixties might feel in pursuits foreign to her taste, — she would have collapsed into querulous invalidism or imbecility. Conscious of the splendid reserves of vitality within her, she determined to live out her own life — as such — until disabled by old age or fatal disease.

## CHAPTER VII.

THE house purchased by Mary Washington as the shelter of her declining years still stands, an esteemed relic, in the heart of the town of Fredericksburg. In 1890, it became the property of the *Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities.* It was, in 1775, a long, low cottage, with four windows upon Charles Street, and the same number, of unequal sizes, upon the side thoroughfare. A central hall ran from the front to the back doors. Upon the right of the entrance was a spacious parlor, and opposite this a still larger room, which was selected as the chief apartment of the house, — "the chamber." Back of this was the dining-room, under the sloping roof that took off a half-story from the rear. A large pantry where stores were kept, and a small bed-chamber off the parlor, completed the number of rooms upon the first floor. The

HOME OF MARY WASHINGTON

half-story above-stairs was lighted, back and front, by dormer-windows. In a detached building, behind the dwelling, were kitchen and servants' dormitories.

The stables were upon the corner of the block, the whole of which was occupied by garden and orchard. Madam Washington was always fond of flowers and successful in cultivating them. She transplanted into the garden of her new abode many favorites from across the river. The change was great to one who loved the unrestrained liberty, the wide spaces and free air of plantation-life, yet she made no complaint. "George thought it best," was the reply to query and marvel at the radical change in her surroundings and habits. The formula had answered her mental disinclination to break up her home and dwell within city-limits. She did not care what others thought or said. Amid the various burdens and distractions of the offices pressed upon him, her son made time to superintend the business of removal, and saw her settled comfortably in the unfamiliar quarters before bidding her farewell.

He did not look upon her face again in seven years.

Within the past year, since the effort to erect a suitable memorial above the resting-place of MARY, THE MOTHER OF WASHINGTON has assumed form and proportions, a rumor has been set afloat that she reprobated her son's action in identifying himself with the rebellion against the Parent Country, and remained an obstinate, some say, a malignant Tory, throughout the war. Hence — goes on the calumny — he never visited her during the struggle for Independence, and with difficulty made his peace when it was ended by the victory at Yorktown.

A more baseless and witless slander was never concocted by the latter-day Athenian, whose "new thing" must be "high" in flavor, or fail to tempt his appetite.

Lossing, who had known and consulted the venerable grandson of Martha Washington, and drew his information from others of the same blood; who quotes freely from Sparks, Irving, Everett, and Paulding, as

well as from contemporaneous authorities, writes in serene unconsciousness that such a tale ever had been or could be: —

"Madam Washington was now in the direct line of communication between the Eastern and Southern colonies, and she was in the constant receipt of news concerning the progress of the struggle at all points. Washington communicated to her, as opportunities offered, tidings of the most important occurrences in the strife. Courier after courier would appear at the door of her dwelling with dispatches which told her alternately of victory and of defeat. She received all messages with equanimity, and never betrayed any uncommon emotion. When the cheering news of the victories at Trenton and Princeton reached Fredericksburg, several of her friends congratulated her upon the brilliant achievements of her son, when she simply replied, 'George seems to have deserved well of his country;' and when some of them read paragraphs of letters they had received in which the skill and bravery of Washington were applauded, she said: —

"'Gentlemen, here is too much flattery. Still, George will not forget the lessons I have taught him; he will not forget himself, though he is an object of so much praise.'"

Had he been at that moment, to her apprehension, recreant to the cause of right, a traitor to his king, and in unlawful rebellion against the government to which she felt she owed allegiance, the outspoken matron, ever fearless in defense of truth and justice, would not have talked of his being true to himself and to the lessons she had taught him.

Betty Lewis's descendant is as explicit: —

"During the trying years when her son was leading the Continental forces, the mother was watching and praying, following him with anxious eyes; but to the messengers who brought tidings, whether of victory or defeat, she turned a calm face, whatever tremor of feeling it might mask, and to her daughter she said, chiding her for undue excitement, 'The sister of the commanding general should be an example of fortitude and faith.'"

Again, from the same trustworthy source, we learn of her foremother's demeanor during the "troubled and anxious" eight years "with few lights amid their shadows:" —

"The experience of these years must have been most deeply felt by Washington's mother, but whatever the tension of thought, there was no change of demeanor while she dispersed a large though simple hospitality to the friends who gathered around her far and near; and though her means were limited, her charities were wide and generous. There was something of nervous energy in her constant occupation, knitting-needles ever flying in the nimble fingers; for with her daughter and their domestics to aid, dozens of socks were knitted and sent to the General at camp for distribution, together with garments and provisions, the fruit of her thrift and economy."

Rev. Robert Reid Howison, the author of *The History of Virginia*, and *The Student's History of the United States*, — a man who has given years of toilful study to the collection of materials for the admirable

and useful volumes I have named, — thus responds to a query as to what foundation exists for the story that, if true, stamps an indelible stigma upon the character of the mother of Washington: —

"I am a native of Fredericksburg, and have passed the greater part of my life here and in the immediate vicinity. I have talked, times without number, with people who had known Mrs. Washington. Tales of her personal characteristics, her doings, and her sayings were familiar to me in my boyhood, and I do not hesitate to say that I hear now for the first time that her patriotism was ever called in question. Like Washington, she felt at the beginning of the troubles between King and Colonies, that overt rebellion should, if practicable, be avoided, and with him, she deprecated the suggestion of war with the Mother Country. But, once convinced that the conflict was inevitable, her loyalty never swerved. The cause of American Independence had no more steadfast adherent. I confess myself at a loss to conceive how a slander so ground-

less could have originated, at a period so remote from the event it involves."

In view of the emptiness of the charge, I should not have considered it worth the ink and time I have bestowed upon it, had it been less offensively put forth. When it passes unchallenged in a prominent chapter of the *Daughters of the American Revolution*, and becomes the subject of debate in a prominent Woman's Club, it is well to seize and shake it to pieces. Alongside of the scrap of proof in support of the falsehood, offered by the son's prolonged absence from Fredericksburg, I beg leave, in quitting the unsavory subject, to lay the following sentence from George Washington's letter to Lafayette, dated "*Mount Vernon, February* 1, 1784:" —

"On the eve of Christmas I entered these doors, an older man by *nine years* than when I left them."

The same causes had exiled him from his own and from his mother's home.

Once more, consulting Madam Washington's lineal descendant, we read: —

"When the tidings of the splendid success at Yorktown were brought direct from the General to his mother, she was moved to an exclamation of fervent thanksgiving:

"'Thank God the war is ended, and we shall be blessed with peace, happiness, and independence, for our country is free!'"

A "malignant Tory" would have sat down in sackcloth and ashes to bemoan the day in which the man-child was born who had brought this calamity to pass.

Returning gladly to the even course of our narrative, we find ourselves at the last chapter of the storm-and-stress period, the mighty travail out of which was born our nationality.

On the afternoon of November 11, 1781, Washington arrived in Fredericksburg with his staff of French and American officers, *en route* from Yorktown to Philadelphia. He left his retinue at the place appointed as his headquarters, and walked unattended through streets vocal with his name, to the corner-cottage where his mother, previously apprised of his coming, awaited him. Mr.

Custis tells the story in language that his habitual ornateness cannot rob of tender interest: —

"She was alone, her aged hands employed in the works of domestic industry, when the good news was announced, and it was told that the victor was awaiting at the threshold. She bade him welcome by a warm embrace, and by the well-remembered and endearing name of 'George,' — the familiar name of his childhood. She inquired as to his health, for she marked the lines which mighty cares and toils had made in his manly countenance, and she spoke much of old times and old friends, but of his glory not one word."

One, or both, of two reasons may have caused what strikes the modern reader as strange reticence. Washington's dislike of spoken praise was proverbial. Notable instances of this were his extreme confusion when the Speaker of the House of the Burgesses announced in eulogistic terms the appointment of Major Washington to the supreme command of the Colonial forces, and

in 1789, when, at a New York theatre, the interlude of the play promised a complimentary reference to himself. "He smiled," says a chronicler, "but looked grave and uneasy, expecting some personal adulation, which always annoyed him." To no one was this idiosyncrasy better known than to her who for her part held flattery so cheap that nobody dared offer it to her. She would comprehend, moreover, with the quick intuition which stood her in stead of worldly address, that he was satiated with "war-talk," and hungered like a weary child for the homely converse of olden times. He longed to know himself again as her son and intimate. Unheralded and unaccompanied, he had come back to bow himself at her knee, and she met him in kind. The grand simplicity of one found a clear, full echo in the other.

Again, Mary Washington belonged to the school, now no more, of parents who held as an invariable rule that praise of one's offspring was in bad taste, and a positive injury to the subject of laudation if heard

by him. When she had said, "George will be true to himself," she covered the whole ground in her own mind. She had the English horror of wordy scenes and melodramatic situations, and had guarded the door of her lips so long that they would not have opened readily to sentimental ejaculations.

Her only public appearance as the hero's mother was at the Peace Ball given in Fredericksburg during the visit of Washington to that town. With all her majestic self-command, she did not disguise the pleasure with which she received the special request of the managers that she would honor the occasion with her presence. There was even a happy flutter in the playful rejoinder that "her dancing days were pretty well over, but that if her coming would contribute to the general pleasure she would attend."

The town-hall was hung with flags and festooned with evergreens, and blazed with light on the November night of the festival. The glitter of French uniforms and the gala-

attire of the women present, who had drawn forth from chest and wardrobe all the finery the war had left them, made the scene the gayest the "home-body" had ever beheld. We please ourselves by speculating whether or not Betty Lewis was allowed to lace up the black silk gown and adjust the snowy kerchief and cap the wearer adjudged to be the only correct costume for a plain country-woman who had been a widow for almost half her life. We are secure in the belief that her garb pleased the superb son who led her into the room with the respectful courtesy due a queen. A path was opened from the foot to the top of the hall as they appeared in the doorway, and "every head was bowed in reverence." It must have been the proudest moment of her life, but she bore herself with perfect composure then, and after her son, seating her in an armchair upon the daïs reserved for distinguished guests, faced the crowd in prideful expectancy that all his friends would seek to know his mother. She had entered the hall at eight o'clock, and for two hours held court, the most distinguished

people there pressing eagerly forward to be presented to her. She received them with placid dignity, as little excited, to all appearance, as when entertaining her Fredericksburg neighbors in the roomy "chamber," in one corner of which stood the "best bed and tester," hung with the "Virginia cloth curtains," bequeathed in her will to her son George. From her slightly elevated position she could, without rising, overlook the floor, and watched with quiet pleasure the dancers, among them the kingly figure of the Commander-in-Chief, who led a Fredericksburg matron through a minuet.

At ten o'clock, she signed to him to approach, and rose to take his arm, saying in her clear, soft voice: —

"Come, George, it is time for old folks to be at home!"

Smiling a good-night to all, she walked down the room, as erect in form, and as steady in gait, as any dancer there.

One of the French officers (it may have been Rochambeau or De Grasse) exclaimed aloud, as she disappeared: —

"If such are the matrons of America, she may well boast of illustrious sons!"

In the autumn of 1784, Lafayette paid his respects to the widowed mother of his brother-in-arms, visiting Fredericksburg for that purpose alone. Mrs. Fielding Lewis — by this time a widow like her mother, and with a family of young children, as that mother had been forty years ago — was visiting her brother at Mount Vernon, and sent her son Fielding (as Mr. Lossing has it; Mrs. Ella Bassett Washington calls him "Robert") to act as the cicerone of the titled foreigner. Madam Washington's one recreation was walking and working among her flowers, and in her garden-garb of linsey skirt, the short gown we would style "a sacque," and broad-brimmed hat tied over the plaited border of her cap, was raking together dry weeds and sticks into a heap, to which she would presently apply a coal fetched from the kitchen fire, and burn out of sight. The visitors approached the house from Kenmore, by way of the side-street. The boy, proud of his mission, and knowing

LAFAYETTE WALK

his grandmother too well to fear disconcerting her, pointed her out over the palings to his companion.

"There is my grandmother, sir!" he said complacently, and unlatching the side-gate, led the Marquis into the inclosure, naming him as they neared the venerable mistress of the domain.

The situation would have been intolerable to a woman who had one atom of personal vanity. The startled hostess met it with the *aplomb* of a duchess. She dropped her rake, took between her bare palms the hand the nobleman extended, while he bared his lofty head and bowed before her in deepest reverence. Her voice, at seventy-eight, had no longer the *timbre* of youth, but the modulations were refined: —

"Ah, Marquis! you have come to see an old woman! But come in; I can make you welcome without changing my dress. I am glad to see you. I have often heard my son George speak of you."

She preceded him into the narrow hall, and, near the front entrance, turned, not

into the state parlor, set out stiffly with the "six red leather chairs, the oval table, looking-glasses, and walnut writing-desk with drawers," named in her last will and testament, but into the chamber, her "living-room," where she was used to sit and be "at home." Those acquainted with the ways of "Old Virginia" at that time (and for a century afterward) are sure that a brisk little fire burned in the chimney, the season being autumn, and Madam "an old woman." She seated Lafayette, laid aside her straw hat, and placed herself opposite to him. In her quaint attire, "neat as a nun's," erect as at eighteen, never touching the tall, straight back of her chair, her unfaded eyes full of kindly light, she listened calmly to the panegyric upon her son poured forth by the eloquent Frenchman, whose strong accent must have made his discourse at first hardly intelligible to her unaccustomed ears.

She heard her George lauded as the miracle of his age; as greater than Cæsar, and more modest than Cincinnatus, — the hero whose fame would outlast time.

Her well-known reply is a *multum in parvo.*

"I am not surprised at what George has done. He was always a good boy."

That "good" comprised all public and private virtues to a soul laid out in large, simple lines. What had set a world to wondering had not "surprised" her. The child of prayers and cares — whose greedy ears had from his youth up drunk in tales of worthy deeds done by his ancestors of six hundred years; whose own father had been without fear and without reproach; his mother's pupil as she reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and the judgment to be proclaimed when "The Great Audit" should be made — could be no less than "good." The hero described by the fluent tongue could be no more.

Fredericksburg annalists tell us laughingly, and with sly humor at thought of modern reforms, that Madam Washington mixed with her own hands a mint-julep, and offered it to General Lafayette with a plate of home-made "ginger-cakes." According

to the social customs of the day, she would have been inhospitable had she suffered a guest to depart without some refreshment of which wine or spirits formed a part, and in that region the mint-julep was the prescribed "article." The man of the world accepted the beverage as simply and gracefully as it was tendered, pronounced it delicious, and arose to go. He was on the point of embarking for his native land, he said, and they would probably never meet again. Would she give him her blessing?

She looked up to heaven, folded her hands, and, in sweet, thrilling tones, prayed that God would grant him "safety, happiness, prosperity, and peace." Tears were in the listener's eyes; he bent to kiss the withered hand, thanked her fervently, and took his leave. The grandson, who was the sole witness of the touching scene, could never speak of it without emotion.

Lafayette's report of the interview to his friends at Mount Vernon was: "I have seen the only Roman matron living at this day!"

The stirring events attendant upon the return of peace and the assured independence of the new country over, Madam Washington's life resumed its even tenor. It had been her wont in earlier days to drive herself daily, in fine weather, down to the ferry in her gig, and on board of the flat-bottomed scow that carried passengers over the river. Arrived upon the other side, she made the round of the farm, inspecting fields, gardens, the servants' quarters, and the barns, with the keen eye for neglect and disorder cultivated through the many years of stewardship for her children. If rebuke were needed, she administered it in short, sharp fashion, as in the case of an overseer who had departed from her instruction in an important transaction, excusing himself by saying that "in his judgment" —

"And who gave you the right to use your judgment in the matter?" interrupted the dictator. "*I* command! There is nothing left for *you* but to obey."

The discharged subordinate declared afterward that "her eyes flashed blue light-

ning, and he felt exactly like he had been knocked down."

There is pathos in the anecdote that it was her practice to bring home every day a jug, or demijohn, of water for her own drinking, from a spring of the Stafford plantation, declaring that no other water tasted so good. The rustic fount that was to her as the Well of Bethlehem bears still the name of "Lady Washington's spring."

As years and weakness increased, she was driven about town and across the ferry in a low-hung vehicle, like a topless phaeton. Stephen, the only man-servant in the cottage-establishment, acted as coachman, sitting stiffly upon the box, and thoroughly imbued with a consciousness of his importance as part of the equipage which everybody, young and old, saluted as it passed along the rambling, unpaved streets.

The phaeton was a gift from her son, and she preferred it to any other carriage. Besides it and the bay horse that drew it, her stables held a pair of blacks and a riding-chair or gig, minutiæ worth jotting down

as controverting the false impression that Washington, enjoying his own and his wife's fortunes, allowed his mother to live in poverty.

We are indebted to her great-granddaughter for a graphic portraiture of Madam Washington during her daily drives, which the writer had heard times without number from her father, "Betty" Lewis's son: —

"In summer she wore a dark straw hat with broad brim and low crown, tied under her chin with black ribbon strings; but in winter a warm hood was substituted, and she was wrapped in the purple cloth cloak lined with silk shag (a present from her son George) that is described in the bequests of her will. In her hand she carried her gold-headed cane, which feeble health now rendered necessary as a support."

Slow decay was sapping her natural powers. An accidental blow upon the breast, little regarded at the time, quickened the seeds of a cancerous tumor, decided, at a date when surgical science was comparatively rude, to be incurable. Upon July 24, 1789, Mrs. Lewis's bulletin ran thus: —

"I am sorry to inform you that mother still suffers from her breast. She is sensible of it [that is, of the danger], and is perfectly resigned, — wishes for nothing more than to keep it easy. She wishes to hear from you, and will not believe you are well until she receives it from your hand."

In her hour of mortal extremity, when all she could hope for in life for herself was comparative ease, her heart trembled for the safety of the Nation's Hope. She would trust no tale of his welfare that did not come from him who had never deceived her.

The end was approached by mercifully gradual degrees. She made herself strong enough in the early summer to visit her sons, Samuel and Charles, and assure herself that all was well with them, and her daughter was in daily attendance upon her. On April 14, 1789, she had had a visit from her eldest-born and always her best-beloved child.

The interview was unexpected, and of necessity a hurried one. That very morning Washington had received official notice of

KENMORE

his election to the Presidency of the United States, and he must leave for New York on the morrow. He had galloped up from Mount Vernon to snatch an hour with the woman he revered in weakness and old age as when her will had overruled the boy's plans of a career. He found her in "the chamber," alert in mind and serene of spirit, but so altered in appearance that his heart misgave him. Concealing his dreads, he began to speak cheerfully of his intention, so soon as public business could be disposed of, to return to Virginia and see her again.

She stayed him there with steady voice and feeble hand. This would be their last meeting in this life, she said. She was old, and a fatal disease was upon her. She would not be long in this world. She trusted in God that she was somewhat prepared for a better. Then, laying the wasted hand upon the head bowed to her shoulder, she told him that Heaven's and his mother's blessing would always be with him.

When he said reluctantly that he must be gone, she arose also, as loath to lose sight

of him, and walked with him to the chamber-door, leaning for the last time upon his arm, and he felt how light was the wasted form, how uneven the once firm tread. As he stooped for a parting embrace, she felt him slip a purse into her hand.

She put it back, raising her head with the old-time pride.

"I don't need it!" she said, and repeated the formula often upon the lips of the aged: "My wants are few."

It should be a keepsake from him, he answered, and would not take it back again. It was full of gold, as she saw. They were at the door, through which the faithful body-servant, "Billy Lee," was visible, holding his master's horse. Time pressed, but he lingered to plead tenderly, "Whether you think you need it or not, — for *my* sake, mother!"

We consult once more Mrs. Ella Bassett Washington's narrative: "The appeal was irresistible, and the purse was retained; but after he had gone she dropped it indifferently upon the table, and sank into a chair,

lost in sad reverie. Her grandson, coming in with a message, witnessed the parting scene, and, too respectful to disturb her sorrow, hastened home to tell his mother all that had passed. Feeling anxious touching her mother's state, and fearing that this painful excitement might cause serious illness, she hastened at once to her side. Very calm and still they found her, seated with drooping head and calm, unseeing eyes."

"Unseeing" in semblance, yet they saw very far into the checkered past and pierced the shadowy future. To very few is it permitted to know, beyond peradventure, that their work upon this earth is fully done, and well done. This woman had this assurance, and henceforward was "perfectly resigned and wished for nothing." She had borne the burden of five young lives upon unbending shoulders; had brought up her children to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with their God; had nursed the fortune of each with wisdom, and delivered it over to him with equity. As friend, neighbor, and Christian, she had carried herself blame-

lessly in the sight of all. By reason of strength of body and mind, she had passed the fourscore years that usually bound human usefulness. Her children were doing their parts well in life; of her first-born she might have said in reverent thankfulness that she had seen in him of the travail of her soul, and was satisfied. There remained to be cared for only "an old woman," racked by painful disease. Yet, with all her fullness of resignation, the faithful heart, the depth of whose capacity for loving few divined, yearned over the darling whom she had never called by that sweet name, — and she should see his face no more.

She had *lived* her love for him as for the husband of her youth, for the baby taken from her breast almost fifty years ago, and for the mother whose fostering care of the fatherless girl had been her training for a similar task.

Ah, well! she would soon be with them, and God was good. His mercies were from everlasting, and his faithfulness unto all generations.

She died, "upheld by unfaltering faith in the promises of the Bible, and by full belief in the communion of the saints," August 25, 1789, surrounded by children and friends. New York was a week away even by special post-rider, and the President did not receive the news until September 1.

## CHAPTER VIII.

Mary Washington had been one of the most familiar figures in Fredericksburg for over fourteen years, and the announcement of her decease produced a profound sensation. The closed blinds of the corner-cottage suggested to high and low incidents of the busy existence that had become a part of the history of the town. Men gathered in groups on the street-corners to discuss in bated tones national events with which the life that had gone out was connected; women, in their own homes, or "running over" to sit upon a neighbor's doorstep or porch, in the sweet informal fashion of Southern sociability, reminded one another of the many "ways," the very eccentricity of which was charming now, that had marked Madam Washington's individuality.

Of how used they were to see her in the summer sunsets emerge from the side-gate

of her garden (the one by which Lafayette entered), and pace slowly down the side-walk to the stable to be sure that Stephen bedded and fed the horses, and that Betsy, his wife, "stripped" the last and richest drops of cream from the cows. She would stand at the open doors of the stable, watching these operations and giving orders for the night or morrow, exchanging cheery salutations with chance passers-by, her never-idle fingers busy with her knitting, or, at certain seasons, picking out the black seeds from a mass of raw cotton in her apron. People used to smile at the homely picture when they remembered her stately son. They recalled to-day that there was ever a sort of dignity about her; that she never gossiped; how kindly was her interest in the suffering and sorrowing, and that diligence in business became the New World housewife more than elegant idleness.

How it was told as a joke at which she laughed with her daughter when it filtrated to them, that when she might be expected at Kenmore to pass the day or afternoon, a

watch was posted at the upper windows of the great house to give notice when the blacked-robed figure, with erect head and measured step, issued from the gate, followed by her maid, Patsey, who bore her mistress's work-basket and shawl. Whereupon, the whole household force of Kenmore flew to broom, duster, and scrubbing-brush in frantic haste, to have every corner speckless and shining before "Ole Mistis" arrived, and the children were ready with smooth pinafores and clean faces to meet "Grandmother" at the outer door.

How her son George had learned punctuality in a school so strict that her neighbors averred that they set their watches by the ringing of her breakfast, dinner, and supper bell, sounded as regularly and as long when she was the only person to be summoned to table as if there were a houseful of guests; and that her pew in St. George's Church was occupied at precisely the same moment of time every Sunday morning.

How the fashion of her raiment had not changed in twenty years; that nobody had

ever seen her look in the least fashionable, and nobody ever otherwise than perfectly neat.

How those who had been to look at her, lying in the best bed in the shadowy corner of her chamber, the thin hands crossed upon a bosom that would never ache again with the cruel pain, had noted that the strongly-marked features people had not called handsome for forty years were subdued into a wondrous likeness to her son, and grew younger and sweeter hour by hour, until it was easy to credit the traditions of her youthful comeliness.

How — the voices of the gossips falling at the mention of it — she had chosen her burial-place, and asked of Mrs. Lewis the gift of a spot upon her plantation for this purpose, and that the grave had already been marked out where no grave was ever dug before.

It was a gentle knoll not far from the Kenmore grounds, and crowned by a few gray boulders overshadowed by a clump of trees. It had been remarked that she often

resorted to this retreat, sometimes alone with her basket of mending, or her knitting, or her Bible. Nobody passed very near her at such times, for the place lay apart from any footpath, but many had seen from a distance the motionless figure seated upon a flat rock, and wondered "what the old Madam" was thinking about, sitting there so long.

Oftener, she was surrounded by the Lewis children, who preferred "Grandmother's Bible-stories" to any others they ever heard. The granddaughter of one of the little band relates that "the manner of her speaking was so deeply impressive that neither the lessons taught nor the scenes connected with them were ever forgotten by the young listeners." As one of them related, when he was himself growing old, — "There was a spell over them as they looked into grandmother's uplifted face, with its sweet expression of perfect peace, and they were very quiet during the homeward walk."

I sat for a long hour upon the flat gray rock one fair May day a few months ago.

"ORATORY ROCK"

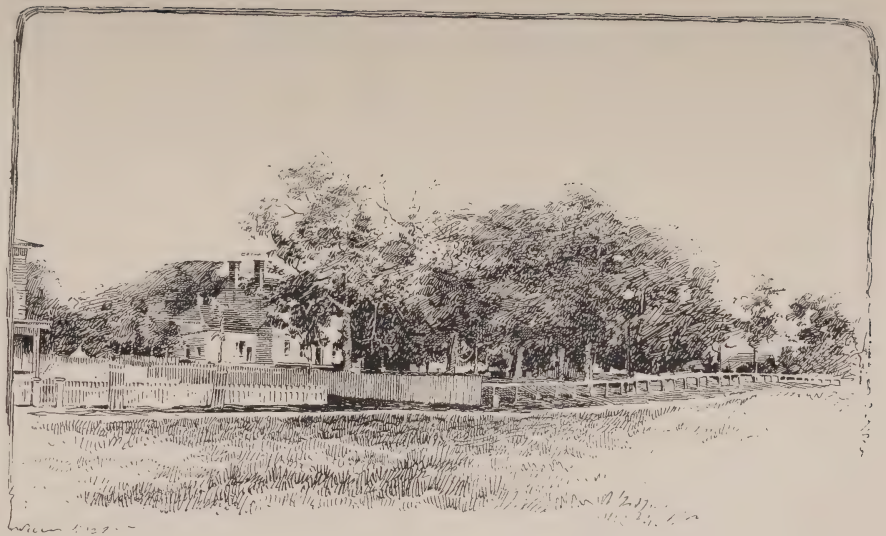
The "two splendid pines towering above it" have died a natural death, and deciduous trees have taken their place. They cast flickering shadows upon the rough surface of the boulder as the wind stirred them and rustled the grasses and wild flowers growing about the base. The knoll falls gently away to the beautiful valley of the Rappahannock, a panorama of fertile farms, groves, and homesteads, bounded by low hills curving against the horizon. The time-stained walls and hipped roof of Kenmore are in full sight, and the mother's eyes must have rested in gratification upon the house that held, in luxurious happiness, her only daughter and the beloved little ones. Her own cottage was then visible, for between the two dwellings the space not occupied by houses was open from the Kenmore lawn to the garden where flourished the calycanthus and box brought from Pine Grove.

The knowledge that this was the chosen oratory of one whose character had seemed to me, up to that hour, granitic in reserve and strength, was a revelation. That "silent

side" of her had color and sentiment unsuspected save by those who knew and loved her best, — the children that crowded about her feet as the ferns and clover-blossoms nestled in the shadow of the rock; the son whose great nature sprang from hers as the pines took root in the warm heart of the earth beneath the boulder.

The Rappahannock mart mourned for her on the August day of the funeral, as one man. Business was suspended, and crape hung from most of the closed shops and warehouses. The sanctuary in which she had been a reverent communicant was thronged to hear the burial service read above the remains. The coffin was carried from the church on men's shoulders to the quiet hillside, and every foot of the knoll was covered by the concourse of mourners and spectators. All over the country press and pulpit made solemn note of the event; in New York, members of Congress and many private citizens wore crape for thirty days, as for a distinguished public official.

On the evening of Thursday, August 27,



KENMORE FROM "ORATORY ROCK"

1789, a near neighbor of Mary Washington penned this tribute to her memory: —

"It is usual, when virtuous and conspicuous persons quit this terrestrial abode, to publish elaborate panegyrics on their characters, but suffice it to say that she conducted herself through this transitory life with virtue and prudence worthy of the mother of the greatest hero that ever adorned the annals of history. There is no fame in the world more pure than that of the mother of Washington, and no woman since the mother of Christ has left a better claim to the affectionate reverence of mankind."

George Washington Parke Custis, the grandson of Martha Washington, and the adopted son of the first President, wrote thirty-seven years after her decease: —

"Thus lived and died this distinguished woman. Had she been of the olden time, statues would have been erected to her memory at the Capitol, and she would have been called the Mother of Romans. When another century has elapsed, and our descendants shall have learned the true value

of liberty, how will the fame of the paternal chief be cherished in story and in song! Nor will be forgotten she who first bent the twig to incline the tree to glory. Then, and not till then, will youth and age, maid and matron, aye, and bearded men, repair to the now-neglected grave of the MOTHER OF WASHINGTON."

The tale of the various attempts to erect a suitable memorial above the grave dates very far back. Projects were agitated soon after Mrs. Washington's death to mark the spot by a stone to be paid for by the United States Government. In the confusion attendant upon the establishment of a new nation, these lapsed, were revived, and again forgotten. Mr. Custis's stirring appeal in 1826 awoke interest all over the country, and for some months it seemed that the work would be done. The proverbial apathy of republics to their dead benefactors was not so easily overcome. The Kenmore estate passed out of the Lewis family, and the succeeding proprietors buried the dead of two generations near the now sunken mound

under which lay all that was mortal of Mary Washington, with the faithful housekeeper and life-long friend of Mrs. Lewis close beside her. Mrs. Lewis died in Culpepper County, at her daughter's home, and was buried there. Washington slept in the mouldering vault at Mount Vernon. By and by a low brick wall inclosed the family burying-ground close by the grave of the two women, and made more palpable the neglect of that which was left outside.

In 1833, Silas Burrows, a wealthy and patriotic citizen of New York, offered to bear the whole expense of constructing a stately monument to the memory of "MARY, THE MOTHER OF WASHINGTON."

The design lies before me as I write. A square pedestal bears the simple inscription I have just set down. Grecian columns, two on each side, are set in embrasures above; four eagles sit over these; an obelisk tapers to the bust of Washington, and upon the bust is a fifth eagle, with outstretched wings and beak. The conception is fantastic and ungraceful, and was to be expensive.

The corner-stone was laid with great pomp and circumstance, which were duly detailed in the best manner of the Jenkyns of the day in the columns of the *New York Mirror*, date of June 8, 1833. Brittle pages that crack as we flutter them are covered with eulogy of the dead and the self-gratulations of the living. We read with mournful curiosity, considering what followed it all, that early on the morning of May 7, 1833, the city was crowded to overflowing. At ten o'clock a procession was formed by the marshals of the day, in the following order:

1. A detachment of cavalry.

2. The chief architect and Masonic societies. In this division Mr. Burrows was assigned a conspicuous and honorable situation.

3. The President of the United States in an open carriage with the head of departments and his private secretary, accompanied by the Monument Committee.

4. Clergy and relatives of Washington.

5. The Mayor and Common Council.

6. A handsome company of small boys, in complete uniform, with wooden guns.

7. The officers of the army and navy of the United States, and the invited strangers.

8. A battalion of volunteers under the command of Major Patten, and several companies of infantry from Washington and Alexandria, with the Marine Band.

9. Strangers and citizens, six abreast. It is estimated that there were between ten and fifteen thousand persons present on the occasion.

The corner-stone was adjusted with Masonic ceremonies, and Andrew Jackson laid upon it the engraved plate, "intended to distinguish it." In the address that accompanied the transfer of the plate from the hands of Mr. Bassett — a relative of Madam Washington and chairman of the Monument Committee — into those of the President, Mr. Bassett said: —

"Let us carry with us hence, engraved on our hearts, the memory of her who is here interred: her fortitude, her piety, her every grace of life; her sweet peace in death, through her sure hope of a blessed immortality."

The President dwelt at length upon the characteristics of her they had met to honor, a eulogy which hundreds of his auditors could have verified, or challenged from their own memories. As the speaker gained his information from Madam Washington's contemporaries, his verdict is of distinct value:

"She was remarkable for the vigor of her intellect and the firmness of her resolution. Left in early life the sole parent of a numerous family, she devoted herself with exemplary fidelity to the task of guiding and educating them. . . . A firm believer in the sacred truths of religion, she taught its principles to her children, and inculcated an early obedience to its injunctions. It is said by those who knew her intimately that she acquired and maintained a wonderful ascendancy over those around her. This true characteristic of genius attended her through life, and even in its decline, after her son had led his country to independence and had been called to preside over her councils, he approached her with the same reverence she had taught him to exhibit in

early youth. This course of maternal discipline no doubt restrained the natural ardor of his temperament, and conferred upon him that power of self-command which was one of the most remarkable traits of his character. . . .

"Fellow-citizens! at your request and in your name, I now deposit this plate in the spot destined for it; and when the American citizen shall, in after ages, come up to this high and holy place and lay his hand upon this sacred column, may he recall the virtues of her who sleeps beneath, and depart with his affection purified and his piety strengthened, while he invokes blessings upon the memory of the MOTHER OF WASHINGTON!"

The ceremonies concluded with the reading of a poem by Lydia Huntley Sigourney, then the most popular writer of verse in America. We make room for a portion of it:—

"Long hast thou slept unnoticed. Nature stole
In her soft ministry around thy bed,
And spread her vernal coverings, violet-gemmed,
And pearled with dews. She bade sweet Summer
bring

Gifts of frankincense with sweet song of birds,
And Autumn cast his yellow coronet
Down at thy feet; — and stormy Winter speak
Hoarsely of man's neglect. But now we come
To do thee homage, mother of our chief!
Fit homage, such as honoreth him who pays.

"Methinks we see thee as in olden time,
Simple in garb, majestic and serene,
Unawed by pomp and circumstance; in truth,
Inflexible, and with a Spartan zeal
Repressing vice, and making folly grave.
Thou didst not deem it woman's part to waste
Life in inglorious sloth, to sport awhile
Amid the flowers, or on the summer wave,
Then fleet like the ephemeron away,
Building no temple in her children's hearts,
Save to the vanity and pride of life
Which she had worshiped."

I have made this long excerpt from the proceedings of that day — memorable in the history of Fredericksburg — not in derision, or even in sad sarcasm, but as cumulative testimony to the native nobility, the sterling virtues, and rare powers of her whose story I have told, out of the fullness of a heart moved by the study, and by the thought of the tarnish left upon the national name

by failure to recognize our debt to this woman.

Almost *sixty years* after panegyric and poem vibrated upon the listening air of that May-day, there stands above the corner-stone that which desecrates the spot. The hand that laid the marble block and that which set the engraved plate upon it were dust a generation ago; those who remain of the boy-soldiers are aged men, telling in quavering tones how the architect died without the sight of the stately pile he had planned, and of the legends, some romantic, some reasonable, which account for the abandonment of the scheme. Fredericksburg folks affect most seriously the tale that a Southern girl set the enterprise as a test of a Northern lover's devotion, and jilted him before the work was finished. The likelier story is that a sudden reverse of fortune compelled Mr. Burrows to withhold the funds necessary for the completion of the monument. They tell you — white-haired men who stepped so proudly to national airs sounded by the Marine Band — that when

the marble monolith which was to be set upon the recessed columns and buttressed corners was landed at the Fredericksburg dock, disasters followed the attempt to drag it the half mile and more that lay between the river and monument. A mule was killed and a horse badly hurt, and finally the immense mass was drawn by long lines of men to its resting-place.

It rests there still, prone at the base of the half-ruined pile, stained by time and weather, and chipped by vandal hammers, a sight as melancholy as any the sun shines on. A worthier memorial of the American matron whom the nations praised afar off is the sturdy boulder, concealed from the passing tourist by the wall that threw out Mary Washington's grave into the common where cattle browsed and village tramps sauntered and slumbered at pleasure.

It was reserved for the women whose grandmothers were her contemporaries to right this wrong to her and to their sex. With no blare of trumpets in the way of public demonstration, and no protestation of

UNFINISHED MONUMENT

what they meant to accomplish, the members of the National Mary Washington Memorial Association are moving steadily toward the desired end. By the time the reader's eye rests upon these lines, as we hope fondly, success will be so far assured that we may gratefully look forward to the day when the "sacred column" will be no more a chimera of the oratorical imagination, or a stinging satire upon bombastic patriotism that began to build and was not willing to finish.

## CHAPTER IX.

MADAM WASHINGTON'S great-granddaughter says of her personal appearance, as described "by those who remembered her in the later years of her life," that she was "of medium size, and well proportioned, the dignity of bearing and the erect carriage giving something of stateliness to her presence, while her features were regular and strongly marked, her brow fine, and her eyes a clear blue."

Lossing, upon the authority of Washington's adopted son, writes: —

"She was of the full height of woman, and in person compactly built and well proportioned. She possessed great physical strength and powers of endurance, and enjoyed through life robust health. Her features were strongly marked, but pleasing in expression; at the same time there was a dignity in her manner that was, at first,

somewhat repellant to a stranger, but it always commanded thorough respect from her friends and acquaintances. Her voice was sweet, almost musical, in its cadences, yet it was firm and decided, and she was always cheerful in spirit."

Mr. Custis held to the latest day of his life the belief that "there was no portrait extant of the MOTHER OF WASHINGTON." The emphatic deliverance casts discredit upon what were else a plausible story touching a picture of Mary Washington taken in her early bellehood, which hung in the bedroom of the first President, at Mount Vernon. As a member of Washington's family, it was impossible that Martha Washington's grandson should have been ignorant of the existence of a picture said to have been most highly prized by the President. So jealous was his affection for it, that the plausible tale alluded to above dwells upon his reluctance to commit it to an artist, who offered to have mended a "hole ground in the canvas" by an accident, and the picture restored in England. The commission was

finally given, the tale goes on to say, the picture went to England five years before Washington's death, and was forgotten, apparently, by him who had been unwilling to have it out of his sight for so many years, certainly forgotten by his executors, who never claimed it. The improbability that Mr. Custis, a zealous antiquarian, and punctilious to a fault in treasuring reminiscences of the great man whose adopted son he was, should also have let slip from memory all the interesting particulars connected with the transfer of the valued relic, need not be enlarged upon. The circumstances would certainly have been recalled to his mind by the many questions put to him as to whether or not any likeness of her whom he eulogizes as "this distinguished woman" were ever painted. In compiling his *Records and Private Memoranda of Washington*, and in his biographical sketch of Mary Washington herself, the defaced portrait would have been too tempting a subject to be passed over.

The pretensions to genuineness of the

fancy sketch of the Louis Quinze beauty who has done duty as the Rose of Epping Forest in divers periodicals have been disposed of by abler pens than mine. The object of this supplementary chapter to a narrative that has been throughout a labor of love is to present a matter that has come to light since Mr. Custis wrote and lived. The history of another picture claiming to be a likeness of Mary Washington is told by Lossing in his *Mary and Martha, the Mother and Wife of Washington.* From this I compile the Story of a Portrait, which I crave leave to lay before the reader in these concluding pages of my book.

Mr. George Field, who died in England in 1854, at the age of seventy-seven, was the author of the *British School of Modern Artists*, and other works upon art and philosophy. In his boyhood, while on a visit to Cookham, Berkshire, England, he saw the "pretty country cottage in which," said neighborhood gossips, "the parents of General Washington had resided" while in England, and from which they removed to

America. In the vicinity of Cookham lived Mrs. Morer, an old woman whose aunt — or so she was fond of relating — had been a maid in Augustine Washington's family and accompanied him and Mrs. Washington to America. Upon quitting England, the niece, whose maiden name was Taylor, said that the Washingtons had presented to her family among other articles of household stuff, ornaments, etc., a portrait of Mrs. Washington taken before her marriage. Mr. Field saw and examined the picture then, and, hearing some years afterward (in 1812) of Mrs. Morer's death, he sent an agent to buy up all her pictures at an auction-sale of her effects. Among them, as he had hoped and intended to do, he secured the portrait he had coveted. By a will dated in 1852, Mr. Field bequeathed this relic, in the authenticity of which he firmly believed, to Mr. George Harvey, an artist who had heard and credited the history of the legacy. After receiving it, Mr. Harvey made it his business to visit Cookham to examine the registers of the parish

and catechise "old inhabitants." The popular tradition that the Washingtons had once been residents of the region was proved to be correct by the frequent recurrence of the names of Washington and Ball in the burial register from 1701 to 1729. As I have before stated, the registers of burials and marriages had been maliciously destroyed, the present incumbent of the living explained, "by a rascally lawyer."

Among the aged residents whom Mr. Harvey interviewed was a man who had once occupied a house "in which it was supposed that George Washington was born." He ascertained, moreover, that Augustine Washington was in England in 1729 upon business.

The next owner of the picture was Professor S. F. B. Morse, LL. D. He purchased it, with the "pedigree" thereof, from Mr. Harvey. It was accompanied by a certified copy of Mr. Field's will and his reasons for believing in the genuineness of the portrait. Professor Morse brought it to the notice of Dr. Lossing while the latter was on a visit

at the Professor's house in New York. The venerable historiographer was at once struck by the resemblance to the best likenesses of George Washington, and became thoroughly convinced by examination of letters and written affidavits submitted to him by Professor Morse, that the portrait was that of Mary Ball.

In the opinion of Mr. Harvey, Professor Morse, and other art-critics, the painting is from the hand of Thomas Hudson, who was a popular portrait-painter in London about 1723.

Here is Dr. Lossing's summing up, after a patient rehearsal of the incidents connected with the discovery of the picture and its passage from one owner to another: —

"At the time of Mary Ball's sojourn in England, Hudson had a summer-residence in Berkshire County, in the neighborhood of the residences of the Washingtons and Balls. May not one of the latter have employed him to paint the portrait of their charming Virginia kinswoman? Professor Morse expressed his strong conviction that

this picture is a portrait of Mary Ball, which had somehow fallen into the possession of Mrs. Morer, and, through Mr. Field and Mr. Harvey, had come to him. And so satisfied am I by the weight of concurrent testimony that it is a portrait of the pretty Virginia girl whom Augustine Washington married in 1730, that I venture to offer a copy of it in this volume as a genuine likeness of the person of the MOTHER OF WASHINGTON."

Thus far had I read when I turned back to study the not very fine engraving, with the facsimile of Mary Ball's signature beneath it. While I scanned it, a friend was announced, to whom I said, presently, without preface, and concealing the name below the print with my hand: —

"Did you ever see this face before?"

"Never," he answered unhesitatingly.

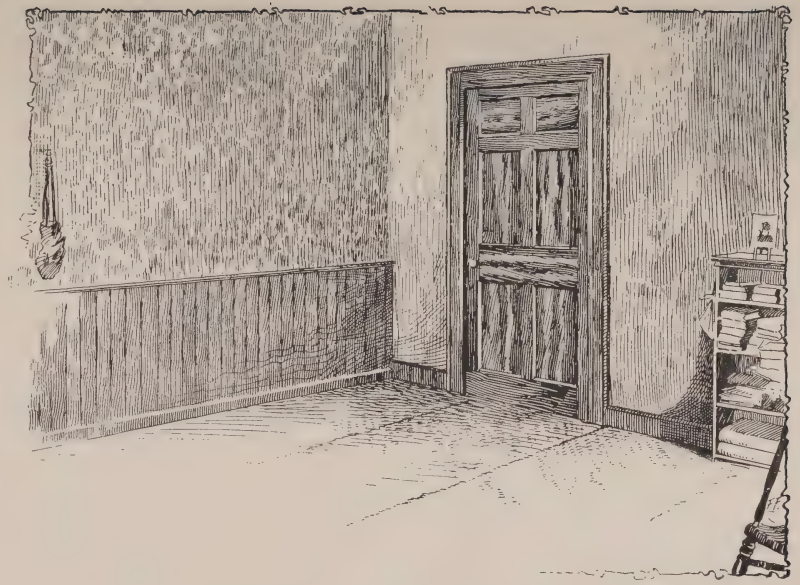
"What do you think of it?"

"Hum-m-m! I can tell you whom it resembles, — General Washington!" with the air of one who says a preposterous thing.

His amazement was unaffected when told how nearly he had hit the mark. He had

had no suspicion of the nature of my studies, or that any likeness of Mary Washington was extant.

A year or more after this bit of "concurrent" down had floated to me, a committee appointed by the Managers of the National Mary Washington Memorial Association was permitted, by the courtesy of a daughter of the late Professor Morse, to inspect the picture, which belongs to the Morse estate. The painting has all of Hudson's faults, and few of his merits, but conveys the indescribable impression one often experiences in looking at the picture of a person he has never seen, — that the likeness must be excellent. As a work of art, it is below mediocrity, being flat, and without depth of color or vigor of treatment. These blemishes may explain why it was not transported to America at a time when freight was troublesome and expensive. There is a tradition that Augustine Washington's family portraits were destroyed when the Wakefield house was burned. It may well have been that he possessed one of his wife



ROOM IN WHICH MARY WASHINGTON DIED

which he preferred to what Hudson may have dashed off upon the canvas, in experiment or pastime, when they were country neighbors.

The portrait is less than life-size, and represents a sitting figure. The bodice is cut low, and fits loosely upon bosom and shoulders. In color the gown is a warm russet, and the drapery has a shadowless effect, as if the thought had been to lay another color over it. The abundant hair is light chestnut; the eyes are of a bluish gray, and rather far apart; the nose is a fine aquiline; the corners of the mouth are slightly depressed. The hands are small, and so badly drawn as to look like stuffed gloves; one of them holds a lily between thumb and finger as it lies upon the girl's knee. A string of pearls encircles a pretty throat; the pose is natural and graceful, yet there is something ungirlish in it. The resemblance to George Washington is startling at the first glance, and it grew upon the little group of gazers until we could hardly withdraw our eyes.

The calm dignity of feature and figure; the clear, fearless eyes over which the lids drooped heavily toward the temples, — a marked peculiarity in all the Washington portraits; the half-sad look imparted to the lower half of the face by the downward curve of the lip-lines, — had in them something weirdly familiar and fascinating. We placed the picture in half a dozen different lights, and looked at it from every angle; then the eyes of each member of the committee were turned upon the others, and all said mutely the same thing.

Something was said, presently, of a desire to compare the portrait with one of "her son." The phrase dropped naturally from the tongue, and everybody accepted it without smile or cavil. Mr. G. W. Story, the courteous and accomplished Curator of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, in whose private office the painting has been placed for safe-keeping, left us for a moment, and, returning, placed an admirable copy of Gilbert Stuart's "Washington" upon a chair in a line with Hudson's picture. A simultaneous

exclamation broke from all present. As the most skeptical among us afterward confessed, — it was like "Q. E. D."!

A hundred times since I began this Story have the two faces, as I then beheld them, passed between me and the paper. Gravely meditative, with the subtle intimation of repressed power in every lineament, and the nameless pensiveness bespeaking a straitening of soul until a great, overshadowing destiny be accomplished, — these link them together in my memory, and to my apprehension proclaim them to be of one blood and one spirit.

However much of this may be fantasy and how much truth, there is no doubt that the attributes which made the greatest American what all ages will acknowledge him to have been were set like type of purest metal in the plastic nature of the "big boy" by her who has slept for over a century upon the consecrated knoll overlooking the Rappahannock valley.

Spontaneous generation of virtue is no more a possibility than that physical life

should be self-quickened. Washington was not an abnormal product of chance elements, but the natural and glorious upspringing and fruit-bearing, after its kind, of good seed cast into good ground.

# APPENDIX

THE WILL OF MARY WASHINGTON, AS REGISTERED IN THE CLERK'S OFFICE AT FREDERICKSBURG, VIRGINIA.

In the name of God! Amen! I, Mary Washington, of Fredericksburg in the County of Spotsylvania, being in good health, but calling to mind the uncertainty of this life, and willing to dispose of what remains of my worldly estate, do make and publish this, my last will, recommending my soul into the hands of my Creator, hoping for a remission of all my sins through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of mankind; I dispose of my worldly estate as follows:

*Imprimis.* — I give to my son, General George Washington, all my land in Accokeek Run, in the County of Stafford, and also my negro boy George, to him and his heirs forever. Also my best bed, bedstead, and Virginia cloth curtains (the same that stands in my best bed-room), my quilted blue and white quilt and my best dressing-glass.

Item. — I give and devise to my son, Charles Washington, my negro man Tom, to him and his assigns forever.

Item. — I give and devise to my daughter Bettie Lewis, my phaeton and my bay horse.

Item. — I give and devise to my daughter-in-law, Hannah Washington, my purple cloth cloak lined with shag.

Item. — I give and devise to my grandson, Corbin Washington, my negro wench, old Bet, my riding chair, and two black horses, to him and his assigns forever.

Item. — I give and devise to my grandson, Fielding Lewis, my negro man Frederick, to him and his assigns forever, also eight silver tablespoons, half of my crockery ware and the blue and white tea china, with book case, oval table, one bedstead, one pair sheets, one pair blankets and white cotton counterpain, two table cloths, six red leather chairs, half my peuter and one half of my kitchen furniture.

Item. — I give and devise to my grandson, Lawrence Lewis, my negro wench Lydia, to him and his assigns forever.

Item. — I give and devise to my granddaughter, Bettie Curtis, my negro woman, little Bet, and her future increase, to her and her assigns forever. Also my largest looking-glass, my walnut writing desk and drawers, a square dining-table, one bed, bedstead, bolster, one pillow, one blanket and pair sheets, white Virginia cloth counterpains and purple curtains, my red and white tea china, teaspoons, and the other half of my peuter and crockeryware, and the remainder of my iron kitchen furniture.

Item. — I give and devise to my grandson, George Washington, my next best glass, one bed, bedstead, bolster, one pillow, one pair sheets, one blanket and counterpain.

Item. — I devise all my wearing apparel to be equally divided between my granddaughters, Bettie Curtis, Fannie Ball, and Milly Washington, — but should my daughter, Bettie Lewis, fancy any one two or three articles, she is to have them before a division thereof.

Lastly, I nominate and appoint my said son, General George Washington, executor of this, my will, and as I owe few or no debts, I direct my executor to give no security or appraise my estate, but desire the same may be allotted to my devisees, with as little trouble and delay as may be, desiring their acceptance thereof as all the token I now have to give them of my love for them.

In witness thereof, I have hereunto set my hand and seal the 20th day of May, 1788.

MARY WASHINGTON.

Witness, JOHN FERNEYHOUGH.

Signed, sealed, and published in the presence of the said Mary Washington and at her desire.

JNO. MERCER,

JOSEPH WALKER.

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